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International graduate student expectations at RIT

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INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AT RIT

By

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A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the school of Hospitality and Service Management
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M.S. Hospitality-Tourism
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ABSTRACT

Information is a key to seeing problems and experiences encountered by international graduate students while studying abroad. Consequent adaptations to new surroundings have been suggested from several perspectives.

Services offered on-campus could help international graduate students to achieve their main goal: to be successful in their professional and social life. Success could commence from the initial contemplation or decision of studying abroad and might continue throughout their prolonged stay if continuous support was available from the staff and customized services in the college or university selected.

Conducting sixteen face-to-face interviews (using open-ended questions) and two focus groups of four students each, this qualitative study investigates collective elements. These collective elements affect the educational performance, the personal growth, and the environmental cognition that international students have to face during schooling in a foreign country, and particularly at RIT.

Connecting in a logical form the techniques of participant observation, in-depth interviewing, phenomenological theory and inductive reasoning guarantee that the results are useful when implementing programs and services on campus. This is the starting point to build a successful future between the current partners of learning: RIT and the international graduate students community.

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ZMGG, SDP!

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The reality of being a foreigner hits very hard when a person has to make massive personal, social, and environmental changes upon arrival in a new country. Those changes are related to dealing with external factors such as food, climate, language, mannerisms and communication. Such situations occur every time a student goes abroad for higher education. As a crucial center of information and advanced technology, the United States has been constantly attracting many students and scholars worldwide. These international students are located in more than 2,500 American institutions of higher education and represent over 186 nationalities (Brinson & Kottler, 1995).

Being exposed to a new culture, international graduate students are continually challenged to accommodate themselves into a variety of culturally different situations. Besides the normal developmental concerns that every student may have, international graduate students encounter additional stress elements (linguistic, academic, financial, and interpersonal problems) due to the demands for cultural adjustments. Bochner (1972) attributes the cause of these stress elements to four major social roles that an international graduate student has to play after arriving on an American campus.

1. Meeting the expectations of being a student
2. Being a foreigner
3. Being a “cultural ambassador” of his/her native country, and
4. Meeting the personal challenges of growing up as a young adult

Studies related to psychological problems of international graduate students suggest a large gamut of psychological difficulties ranging from simple loneliness, homesickness and irritability

to severe depression, confusion and disorientation. Dillard & Chilsom (1983) maintain that the “actual cultural context on-campus in the United States frequently generates stress, depression, frustration, fear, and finally, pessimism” (pg.101). How do colleges reduce psychological and behavioral concerns, the difficulty international graduate students have interpreting new situations when differences between environment and personal customs happen? How can mental health problems, physical tension, lack or loss of appetite and sleep, low energy levels, headaches, gastrointestinal problems and ulcers, be reduced among cultural groups? How are social relationships and satisfaction with the environment related to the development of an adequate performance by international graduate students?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

From analytical issues on environmental perception, the problem evolves: How would the college offer services to international graduate students to reduce their psychological and behavioral concerns and create a place attachment (emotional linkage of an individual to a particular environment) to their new environment? To answer this question, the environmental perception (sets of attributes that provide hidden dimensions and attributes of surroundings, that give meaning, significance and facilitate recognition, recall and use of environmental information) is divided into three sub-problems:

1. What kind of environment would RIT have to create for the international graduate students in order to accelerate their process of settling into the new environment?
2. How would environmental perception play a role in the process of accepting another place attachment, different from their native countries?
3. How can RIT analyze needs of incoming international graduate students without been previously exposed to those countries and cultures?

This study informs the faculty and the alumni about what needs they have to fulfill to create place attachment for international graduate students. Modifying their environment with an objective of reducing their psychological and behavioral concerns is a new technique that can open the market for more international programs and develop willingness among international graduate students for studying abroad.

BACKGROUND DEVELOPMENT

Although it is clear that international graduate students are people in transition who choose to live in a foreign academic setting to realize their educational objectives, the conditions and the environment in which they have to settle are still open to discussion. For example, in studies related to understanding good performance international students said that they consider place attachment as a fundamental factor. These students consider that this attachment generates identification with the place and fosters social and educational involvement in the preservation of the physical and social features that characterize a student's life (Mesch & Manor, 1998).

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this study is to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations by using a phenomenological approach resulting in a cultural picture. At this stage in the research, the relationship between psychological-behavioral concerns and environmental perception will be defined generally as an essential element to develop a place attachment behavior in international graduate students, having as a consequence good performance in their academic and social life.

Major Questions

1. What are the major factors related to psychological/behavioral concern and environmental perception?
2. What services should be offered and what processes should be followed by colleges to reduce psychological/behavioral concerns in international graduate students?

Employing techniques of face-to-face interviews and focus groups will allow the research to enter into the world of the international graduate students to get to know them and to earn their trust, and systematically keep a detailed written record of what was heard and observed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The problems and experiences encountered while studying abroad and consequent adaptations to new surroundings have been approached from several perspectives. These perspectives include anthropology, education, psychology, and sociology. At the same time, very little data relates services that could be offered to international graduate students on-campus to reduce their efforts at adjustment in a foreign country.

These publications generally relate circumstances, symptoms or concerns that international graduate students have to deal with when arriving in a foreign country. Resources used in this study will include journals, magazines, periodicals, microfiches and books published by authors interested in behavioral concerns of foreign students and place attachment such as Altman & Low, 1992.

Periodicals and journals include Culture shock, Foreign students, Mental health, Acculturation strategies, Community Service International, Perceptions, Behavior, Environment, Cultural Analysis, and Place Attachment.

SIGNIFICANCE

This study is valuable in enhancing an intercultural understanding and gaining an insight into the unique concerns of international graduate students. At the same time, measuring the degree of consensus of international graduate students with regard to their environmental perception or concerns, and offering different services on-campus to reduce those concerns, will increase international graduate students' efficiency, effectiveness and adjustment.

LONG RANGE CONSEQUENCES

If the study accomplishes its purpose, services offered on-campus could help international graduate students to achieve their main goal: to be successful in their professional and social life. This process of being successful could commence from the initial contemplation or decision of studying abroad and might continue all throughout their prolonged stay with continuous support from the staff and customized services in the college or university selected.

In addition, this study could be a resource to expand RIT's reputation among students from other countries. Knowing that current international graduate students would be responsible for building greater reputation/increasing financial benefits, experiences on-campus would be an essential scenario that international graduate students would use to illustrate RIT's (alumni and faculty) performance. This performance will be based on how RIT is aware of international graduate students' needs and how receptive it is to changing when it is needed. This information would be the most important piece for international graduate students to consider when making their decision to study abroad in a particular college.

THESIS FORMAT

Contributions in several areas are integrated and extended to answer the question: "How can international graduate students adapt to their new educational and social environment?" This

problem is related to psychological concerns and environmental perception. The literature of these areas is reviewed in Chapter 2.

As a method to get detailed descriptions of the international students's experiences, their interaction with the new environment and their reaction with the new culture, interviews will be the most important instrument to collect data in this qualitative research. Interviewing international graduate students with open questions, seeing how they behave in their natural setting will be addressed in Chapter 3.

By understanding the psychological concerns and the environmental perception of international graduate students, it is then possible to increase the possibilities of creating a place attachment with them. These possibilities are discussed in Chapter 4. Summary, conclusions, and recommendations will follow in Chapter 5.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

1. **Perception** – The process whereby sensory stimulation is translated into organized or meaningful experience. The perceptual process is not directly observable, but relations can be found between the various types of stimulation and their experiences or percepts. Perceptual functioning varies among cultures and individuals. Perceptions may be influenced by expectations, needs, unconscious ideas, values and conflicts.
2. **Behavior** – The actions or reactions of persons or things in response to external or internal stimuli.
3. **Environmental Perception** – Sets of attributes that provide hidden dimensions and attributes of surroundings that give meaning, and significance and facilitate recognition, recall and use of environmental information.
4. **Psychological and Behavioral Concerns** – Difficulty of interpreting new situations when a difference between environment and personal customs occurs.
5. **Cultural Adjustment or Acculturation** – Cultural changes resulting from contact among various societies over time. Contact may have distinct results, such as the borrowing of certain traits by one culture from another, or the relative fusion of separate cultures.
6. **Place Attachment** – Emotional linkage of an individual to a particular environment.
7. **Mental Health Problems** – Additional stressors due to the demands for cultural adjustments: physical tension, lack or loss of appetite and sleep, low energy levels, headaches, gastrointestinal problems and ulcers.
8. **Intercultural Understanding** – Individuals who show respect to another culture must be able to see the culture from the vantage point of the values and beliefs of the members of

that culture. This understanding of other cultures involves perceptions of worth and the belief that accommodations should be made for cultural differences.

9. **Cultural shock** – a state of bewilderment and distress experienced by an individual who is suddenly exposed to a new, strange or foreign social and cultural environment.

CHAPTER II

Students and scholars perceive higher education in the United States as the best system in the world (Johnson, 1993). As a result, America ranks first among all countries of the world that host foreign students. According to the annual report "Open Doors 1990-1991, from the total worldwide enrollment of 1,168,075 foreign students studying in different countries of the world, 407,530 (34.89%) attended American colleges and universities (Zikopoulos, 1991).

The purpose of the review of the literature is to give emphasis to different changes that international students face when living and studying in a foreign country. Those changes not only involve many socio-cultural, environmental and psychological adjustments, but also many perceived threats and challenges. Knowing those changes will be helpful at the time of giving explanation regarding services that should be provided specifically at RIT.

NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the fact that international students, as a group, have many important commonalities, the types of their acculturative stress, cultural adjustment issues, and help seeking behavior vary depending on such factors as ethnicity gender, age, religious and linguistic backgrounds, sexual orientation, marital status and area of residence on the United States.

A review of the literature relating to the psychological problems of international students suggest a large variety of psychological difficulties ranging from simple loneliness, homesickness and irritability to severe depression, confusion, and disorientation. Dillard & Chisolm (1983) maintain "the actual cultural context on campuses on the United States frequently generates stress, depression, frustration, fear, and finally pessimism" (pg.101). Sandhu & Asrabadi (1994) have empirically identified six principal factors, perceived discrimination, homesickness, perceived hate/rejection, fear, culture shock/stress due to change,

and guilt that contribute significantly to the adjustment problems of foreign students. In addition, language barriers, lack of knowledge of the host culture, difficulty in adapting to the host country customs, and lifestyle maladjustment to the physical environment could all be experienced as a threatening and challenging to an individual's original worldview's and lifestyle.

ADMINISTRATION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Student affairs started in the history of American colleges and universities when deans of students were active participants in the educational mission and in charge of the campus discipline, as an extension of the office of the president. As institutions became more complex, deans of students were responsible of managing the services for students, such as recreation, campus housing, activities, health services, career placement, counseling, and other related services. These three charges – educational discipline, curriculum/student life and student services – combined to define the American pattern for the administration of student affairs (Ping, 1999).

Lampkin & Gibson (1999) explain the value of the student affairs administration:

- Promote healthy social, physical, academic, moral cognitive, career, and personality development of students
- Bring a developmental perspective to the institution's total educational process and learning environment
- Contribute to the effective functioning of the institution, and
- Provide programs and services consistent with the students' needs.

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE STUDENT AFFAIRS

As the world continues changing and the American campuses start opening their doors to foreign students, the traditional role of the student affairs has also changed. This innovative

change started when American universities and colleges embraced the new global reality of interdependence and began to consciously struggle to internationalize student experience and the curriculum. Technical assistance to new independent and developing countries created a core of faculty with experience and scholarly interest in the emerging new world. The communication and transportation revolution opened new possibilities for movement of people, information, ideas, and images. Finally, the emergence of a global economy brought urgency to the educational task of internationalizing the campus.

After this period of learning about foreign students, special and diverse needs of this changing population was delegated to student affairs staff. The first step was to integrate international students into educational programs and campus life. The second step was to utilize the knowledge given by the international students in order to educate American students to the new global condition.

Internationalization of American campuses has brought a whole new set of responsibilities for the student affairs administration. For this reason American campuses have to carefully evaluate their capacity to host more international students. The list of essential campus services is long: immigration assistance and counseling; orientation; both initial and continuing, to campus and community as well as to cultural values and practices; and programs that address barriers to successful academic and personal adjustment in a foreign environment, barriers as basic as food and living arrangements, health services, religious practices and social interaction.

Student services offer an informal curriculum that can lead to increased contact and interdependence among students. In focusing on students' needs and interests, student affairs administration provides settings and occasions for individual and group interaction. Activities complement and supplement the classroom study of international business, comparative arts,

languages, peoples, and cultures by bringing students from different traditions together in the experiential learning that comes from living, working, and sharing together.

What the contemporary campus requires are patterns and structures that allow people to live together, to learn together, and to educate one another. With a population that is racially, ethnically, and nationally diverse, the educational use of discipline is vital. The expanded challenges of the charge of wholeness to student affairs is to seek to educate the whole person to recognize, understand, and accept differences; to extend a global reality of cultural interaction into student organizations and activities; and to make the formal structures of course and degree programs and the pattern of campus life a compatible and reinforcing whole. The services to a diverse population reflect practical and immediate individual needs as well as the needs of organizations that express and help preserve racial, cultural, and religious identity. The challenge to the campus is to open individuals and groups to the interaction necessary to an interdependent world and to a more encompassing identity of being human (Ping, 1999).

CHAPTER III

INTRODUCTION

Cross-cultural adjustment refers to the process through which an individual acquires an increasing level of fitness and compatibility in the new cultural context (Kim, 1988, p. 9). Knowing the uncertainties that foreign students feel about moving to a new place, interacting with unknown students and others, adjusting to a new climate, different foods, and a very different educational system, the key would be to discover what the common connector is between each and every situation that international students encounter at RIT.

NATURE OF STUDY

This qualitative study will investigate collective elements that affect the educational performance, the personal growth, and the environmental cognition that international students have to face by being in a foreign country, particularly at RIT. The question now arises as to how RIT should present a broad framework, and moves beyond what typically are included as on-campus services. The process of outlining what international students choose in a particular alternative (shopping center, transport mode, recreational area, residential environment) will be analyzed. It will involve researching the design of current services that are provided on-campus. In addition to assessing the current services, this study will address the major obstacles that international students confront when using these services. A comparative analysis will be conducted between the current services provided and the new concepts and categories of services that foreign students think RIT should provide.

PROCEDURE

This study will follow a phenomenological approach, which will attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations. What

phenomenologists emphasize are the subjective aspects of people's behavior. They attempt to gain entry into the conceptual world of their subjects in order to understand how and what meaning they construct around events in their daily lives (Geertz, 1973).

The framework of this study is based on two key questions. First, what kind of environment could colleges create to support international students in achieving their goals and to accelerate the process of settling into the new environment? Second, how would the environmental perception play a role in the process of accepting another place attachment, different from their native countries?

Qualitative research as an umbrella term referring to several research strategies will be the way to grasp international graduate students' feelings about the services provided by RIT. The data collected is rich in description of people, places, conversations and experiences not easily handled by statistical procedures. Research questions are formulated to investigate topics in all their complexity. Employing techniques of face-to-face interviews and focus groups will allow the researcher to enter into the world of the international graduate students to get to know them and to earn their trust, and systematically to keep a detailed written account of what was heard and observed.

This study involved conducting sixteen face-to-face interviews (by using open-ended questions) and two focus groups of four students each. The face-to-face interviews were conducted with Indian, Chinese, Bulgarian and South African students who came in fall 1998, 1999 or spring quarter 2000. Seven of the interviews were from Masters in Business Administration, two from Hospitality-Tourism Management, two from Information Technology, two from Computer Integrated Manufacturing, one from Computer Engineering, and one Computer Design. The first focus group included people from Croatia, the Middle East and

Thailand. The second focus group included students from India, Peru and China. All the students from the focus groups were students who came in fall 2000. The purpose of this focus group was to compare current experiences with what had happened last year.

The selection of the interviewees was based on obtaining a generic mix from international graduate students at RIT based on nationality and time of arrival at RIT. Information about international graduate students' population was provided by the international students' office. Referrals were obtained by networking with international graduate students on-campus as well as utilizing references from the Internet (based on the information received by the international students' office).

The process of identifying potential participants for the interviews involved sending e-mails and making calls to a population of a hundred and fifty international students to determine their level of education (graduate or undergraduate students). Also, this process of identifying prospective students included a brief explanation of the purpose of the thesis and then questioning the students to see if they were interested in cooperating in this research. A date and place were coordinated based on the convenience of both parties (interviewees and interviewer). All the interviews were conducted on-campus because most of the graduate international students live on-campus.

The interviews lasted approximately forty-five minutes. All of the interviews were taped with their permission. Some demographic data was collected including nationality, age, program and work experience. Both the face-to-face interviews and the focus groups began with a small talk. The purpose of this was to develop rapport with the interviewees, and search for a common ground. Early in the interviews, brief information of the purpose of the study and assurances of confidentiality were made.

After the ice breaking process (creating a relaxed environment between the interviewer and the interviewee) an open-ended question was asked. This question was about their experiences the first nine months at RIT. Listening carefully was one of the most important elements, and if the information that the respondent imparted was not clear, clarification was made.

As the interviews progressed, more defined guiding questions were developed. These series of questions were asked based on personal experience of the researcher and information from the literature review. Following is the list of guiding questions during the face-to-face interviews (clarification questions are not included in this list).

- ❖ Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT
- ❖ Tell me more about when you applied to RIT; when you got the admission information
- ❖ How do you describe the transportation on-campus? What do you think should be done, if anything?
- ❖ How do you describe the transportation off-campus? What do you think should be done, if anything?
- ❖ How do you describe the recreational area at RIT?
- ❖ Tell me about the registration process at RIT
- ❖ What other services for international students would you recommend to RIT?
- ❖ Tell me your experience about the accommodations
- ❖ How would you evaluate the orientation day?
- ❖ How was the process of getting adapted to a new culture?
- ❖ How did you get the information about RIT?
- ❖ Tell me more about the activities offered to international graduate students

The focus group began with a brief description of the themes found after coding the information from the face-to-face interviews. The purpose of this description was to give to the interviewees a general overview of the process that they were going to be part of. Then, they spoke about how those themes were related to their experiences or not and gave possible solutions for the future.

The open-ended nature of the approach allowed international graduate students to answer from their own frame of reference rather than from one structured by prearranged questions. The focus groups helped to discuss more about the different themes that came from the face-to-face interviews regarding current/future services on-campus. By using an authenticity criterion, the interviewer was able to ascertain from the participants their day-to-day struggle and conflicts. In this specific research the “state of being” of an authenticity criterion is defined as an “educative authenticity”, the increase of awareness and appreciation (although not necessarily the acceptance) of the construction of other stakeholders (Guba, 1990, p.72). The stakeholders in this research are the people who establish different processes at the time of offering services on-campus at RIT. These were aspects that the interviewer took into account at the time of analyzing the data to reduce biases in the research:

- ❖ Interacting with the subjects in a natural, unobtrusive, and unthreatening manner to avoid a change of behavior of the people the researcher was trying to study.
- ❖ Being aware of subjectivity aspects of the study (being an international graduate student): the interviewer didn't express personal experiences or didn't comment on other interviewees' experiences.

Analyzing the data in this phenomenological study will consist of arranging the interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and other materials that the researcher accumulated to increase the

researcher's own understanding. The process started by developing a coding system. This involves several steps: searching through the data for regularities and patterns as well as for topics the data covers, and then writing down words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns. These topics and patterns are coding categories. Then, the next step is to analyze the coding categories. This analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for larger patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned and deciding what the researcher will tell others.

The concept of triangulation was based on the assumption that any bias inherent in particular data sources, investigator, and method could be reduced when used in conjunction with other data sources, investigators and methods (Jick, 1979). This study has analyzed texts, articles and journals in the literature review, conducted interviews of sixteen international graduate students from different fields (Technical and Management), and two focus groups. Based on the data that emerged after coding the face-to-face interviews, the first focus group was conducted. Using the results from the first interview, the second focus group helped to verify the consistency of the findings.

EXPLANATION OF THE STRUCTURE AND PROCESS FOLLOWED BY THE WRITER WHEN ANALYZING THE INTERVIEWS

During analysis of the data three different structures were designed to emphasize the importance of each theme (service that should be improved or created to fulfill international graduate students). The difference between these three kinds of structures was based on the availability of the literature review.

The first structure follows this model: brief introduction of the theme, review of the literature, specific quotes made by students (related to the literature review) and a matrix with the

elements found in the interviews. The second contains a brief introduction of the theme, review of the literature and the matrix with the elements discovered in the interviews. The third includes a brief introduction of the theme specific quotes said from students followed by the matrix with the elements found in the interviews (no literature review related to these themes was available).

First structure: Recreation, Programming, Advisement, Telephone and Other Services (*).

Second structure: Arrival, Admission, Orientation, Cross-cultural adaptation, Food and Accommodation.

Third structure: Transportation and Registration.

*Note: The writer defined other services as general services discussed by the international graduate students, but these services were not explored by the whole sample interviewed. The purpose of including literature review in this theme was to highlight its importance even though not standard across the sample.

ASSUMPTIONS

The pillars of any business are its products and markets (Davis, Stan & Botkin, Jim, 1994). In my opinion, Rochester Institute of Technology believes that as an educational institution, it is offering services on-campus to satisfy the students' expectation. Nevertheless, RIT may not and this differentiation is clarified as the study proceeds.

Another assumption is that previous research has shown the importance of different facilities on-campus to help the learning process of the international graduate students.

It is assumed that the analysis of the interviews and focus groups will reveal the importance of support during the process of learning.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

The questions in this qualitative research are tentative. They are subject to refinement as the proposed statement is; what services should be offered on-campus and what processes should be followed by RIT to promote/support successful assimilation for international graduate students. This general statement will be followed by secondary questions to allow more in depth collection and data.

SUMMARY

The positive results of this research will be based on a methodology, which includes several instruments to assure a comprehensive assessment of the current situation for international graduate students at RIT. Connecting in a logical form the techniques of participant observation, in-depth interviewing, phenomenological theory and inductive reasoning help to insure that the results will be useful in implementing programs and services on campus. This will be the starting point to build a successful future between the current partners of learning: RIT and the international graduate students community.

CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION

After compiling similar features across the series of interviews, themes and elements were organized in matrices to demonstrate the significance of each theme and to provide a holistic understanding of the information collected. Themes are defined as services that should be improved or created to fulfill international graduate students. On the other hand elements are specific category within a particular theme that will help to understand the realistic picture of the services provided by RIT. These are the themes and elements explained in chapter IV.

THEMES	ELEMENTS
Admission	Process, Convenience, Information
Arrival	Convenience, Information, Support
Orientation	People, Information, Process
Cross-cultural adaptation	Information, People, Time
Transportation	Convenience, Information, Schedule, Route
Recreation	Information, Participation, Conditions, Variety
Food	Convenience, Expenditure, Quality/Quantity, Variety, Information
Accommodation	Expenditure, Process, Convenience, Feelings, Information, People
Programming	Feeling, Process, Information, People
Advisement	People, Process, Information
Registration	People, Information, Process
Telephone	Information, Expenditure, Service
Other Services	Information, Facilities

Matrices shown later also include information in parenthesis: a letter and a number. The letter represents the interview from which that specific data was taken and the number represents the exact place where that phrase can be found in the interview. Those interviews are located in Appendix B.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Process: the course, steps or methods toward a desired result. System, procedure.

Convenience: quality of being suitable. Accessibility, benefit, service, availability.

Information: knowledge of a specific event or situation. Data, facts.

Support: to be capable of bearing. Withstand, assistance, help.

People: a body of persons sharing a common religion, culture, language, or inherited condition of life.

Time: a suitable or opportune moment or season. Duration, period, term.

Schedule: a list of times of departures and arrivals. A timetable list, catalog, record.

Route: a customary line of travel. Trajectory, path, line of way.

Participation: the act of taking part or sharing in something cooperation, concurrence, performance.

Conditions: one that is indispensable to the appearance or occurrence of another; prerequisite. Qualification, consideration, allowance.

Variety: the quality or condition of being various or varied. Diversity, distinction, modification.

Expenditure: an expense, money going out, payment.

Quality: an inherent or distinguishing characteristic. Constitution, characteristic, particularity.

Quantity: a considerable amount or number. Magnitude, dimension, bulk, volume, proportions.

Feelings: to be emotionally affected by. Sympathy, tolerance, sufferance, experience.

Service: work done for others as an occupation or a business. Application, usefulness, efficacy.

Facilities: Something created to serve a particular function.

FINDING AND ANALYSIS

Interviewing international graduate students about their experiences on campus and analyzing their comments qualitatively helps to insure the writer is not overly biased by her own experience, and that the findings are explained in detail taking into account different cultures, different expectations and different happenings.

The writer considered “Pre-sojourn expectations and Financial Concerns” as two major subjects that had to be explained at the beginning of Finding and Analysis. This decision was based on the writer’s personal experience and the interviewee’s comments about their expectations and financial status. It is very important to emphasize that knowing international students’ expectations and financial concerns will guarantee that services offered by RIT certainly fulfill different needs related with different cultures, education systems, and economic status.

International students from many different cultures, ethnic groups, and backgrounds contribute significantly to diversity on American campuses, as cross-cultural agents and sources of revenue, and through their future participation in worldwide development. For that reason, this study questioned the international graduate students directly about their experiences.

Pre-sojourn expectations

Pre-sojourn expectations have traditionally been viewed as a crucial factor in mediating subsequent cross-cultural adaptations (Rogers & Ward, 1993). According to Furnham & Bochner (1986), it is commonly thought that expectations that are not confirmed after arrival in the host country can lead to psychological stress and maladjustment. For this reason, anticipation about what to expect in the host country is important in the decision-making

processes of all foreign students. How realistic such expectations are depends on reliable information students can access, the sources, and student ability to decode this information.

The major obstacle was to determine what incidents had a significant impact on those international graduate students, and at the same time separating the experiences that had to occur to complete the required adaptation process. Appendix A lists the demographics of the sixteen interviews and contains the transcripts of the actual interviews conducted for this qualitative study. Each interview has been assigned a letter for reference in the analysis of the data and a number for a specific quotation.

Financial Concern

Financial concern is a practical and critical issue in international students' daily lives. Without adequate financial resources, basic survival becomes an issue. Financial factors have been cited as one of the essential elements that form stressors during international students' adjustment to the new environment (Oropeza & Fitzgibbon, 1991). Oropeza and Fitzgibbon pointed out that the emergence of these kinds of stressors is closely related to changes in one's economic status.

Tables 7 (Recreation), 8 (Food), 9 (Accommodation), 10 (Programming), 13 (Telephone) and 14 (Other Services) present financial concerns as one of the major elements during the discussion of those topics. The reason is due to the financial changes that international graduate students face when arriving at RIT (from a person who has the support from his/her parents while leaving in his/her native country to a full-time student studying abroad). This is a significant change in economic status. To some students, this transformation initiates a consumption of personal resources such as savings and other assets. Others may be required to search for and obtain outside resources (support from others or finding a part-time job as a back-up resource). Any

breakdown or unexpected disturbance in financial resources can threaten an international student's educational pursuit as well as other aspects of living. When this happens, the student may experience stress. For example, because of the recent economic and financial crises in East Asia, many international students from that region have realized that they are no longer able to get the financial support they once had from their families. As a result, they may have to substantially reduce their living expenses, find a job to support themselves, or discontinue their studies in the host country and return home.

✓ **Admission**

Table 1 specifies the importance of coordinating the processes between the colleges and the admission department, training the staff of each department regarding the precise information that should be provided when the international students ask for assistance, and helping the students save time and money when they asking for follow-up of their admission process.

The importance of paying attention to these elements of coordination and training of the staff can be part of a plan in recruiting new international students and keeping those who are already enrolled. Celestino (1999) emphasizes that it has been challenging for US schools to attract foreign students because the students' visas would require the students to leave the country after they finish their studies and US business schools do not have the placement capabilities abroad that they do domestically. The US Department of Commerce, however, has been active in seeking to attract international students to the US, because importing students is good for the US economy. The US Information Agency estimated that in 1996/97, international students contributed almost \$8 billion to the economy based on the amounts that these students spent for tuition, books, housing, transportation, food and entertainment. In addition, foreign students often have visitors from home that contribute to the local tourism industry. In 1998, Department

of Commerce initiatives included "Study USA" missions to Europe (Milan, Italy; Madrid and Barcelona, Spain; and Athens, Greece) and to Latin America (Santiago, Chile; Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, Brazil; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Lima, Peru). In addition, the DOC assists in finding agents abroad for schools that need help with international recruiting and have advocated for schools that are having trouble getting visas for international students.

Table 1: Admission

Process	Convenience	Information
No coordination between College of Business & Admission (A,2)	Calling very expensive (B,6)	Friends' support (C,49)
Inefficient admission & recruitment process (A,7)	Preference in contacting same nationality directly (B,4)	No available international students in the admission office (C,48)
No follow-up admission process (A,38)	Frustration, fear (B,8)	Good process of sending information (F,1)
Process very smooth (D,5)	Unnecessary money expenditure(C,3)	Associations not connected with Admission office (G,80)
Papers arrived late (E,6)	Unnecessary time expenditure (C,4)	No person to contact for information (G,24)
Admission staff not trained about existing associations (G,20)	Phone request about status of admission (G,13)	Information is not provided before leaving native country (G,77)
Lack of communication between Admission and International Student office (G,75)	Money spent to repeat process (G,16)	Lack of information about responsibilities after coming to RIT (M,56)
Late reply from admissions office (L,3)	Available admission website information (L,2)	Support from Graduate assistant/chairman assistant (P,29)
Wrong e-mail info sent, barrier to application (P,46)	No convenience to call from native country (P,41)	No one to ask questions of while in native country (P,40)
Much tension in Admission process (I,13)	Mail delay from native country (P,39)	Questions without answers (P,45)

✓ Arrival

Table 2 shows the importance of receiving information before arriving at RIT. This information is based on characteristics of the accommodations, differentiation between apartments and dorms, and the location of the new housing. Also, it shows the importance of

receiving support at the time of arriving at the airport and moving luggage within the campus, especially several days before the orientation by the International Student Office.

Table 2: Arrival

Convenience	Information	Support
Extension of time in pick up from airport (B,36)	No knowledge about new housing (F,16)	Pick up service provided in other universities (B,37)
Difficulty of moving luggage around campus (F,15)	Keys not available (F,14)	Friends' support (L,9)
Arriving one day before classes started (O,17)	Feeling of arriving blind (P,43)	No pick up from airport (C,11)

Peterson, Briggs, and Dreasher (1999) consider that the International student office staff, in cooperation with other student affairs professionals, faculty, American students, and community volunteers, must work together to create a welcoming environment for international students and their families. Providing quality programs and services for international students is the cornerstone of any initiative to increase the numbers of international students and to retain those presently enrolled. Colleges and universities with good academic programs and well-trained staff who provide courteous, accurate, timely service and informative programs to international students will reap great benefits from their investments. Satisfied international students and alumni recruit relatives, friends, coworkers and others to the United States' schools. There is no quick fix for international success. All faculty and staff must work together on behalf of all students, including international students. Without this commitment, these other offices could incorrectly assume that international students with problems are mainly the responsibility of the international student office.

✓ Orientation

Studies report that when newcomers establish lasting social relationship with co-nationals who have arrived earlier or with host nationals, understanding of the host culture increases and helps to alleviate social and cultural stress (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988; Kaikai, 1989; Kim, 1988). Table 3 shows the value of the international student office, friends, and faculty staff in the initial period time, when the students are creating confidence in the new environment in order to reduce the cultural stress produced by the new surroundings. In addition, it shows the importance of the information provided by RIT regarding new processes to be followed, and different expectations to be fulfilled after arriving on the campus.

Another topic that the interviewees talked about was regarding the advising given the first days of orientation. This includes the staff in charge, the methodology that should be followed in order to guarantee positives results, and the required amount of time for this orientation. Pedersen (1991) suggests that counseling done in an informal way often tends to be more productive than counseling encountered in a formal context when helping international students cope with their educational and socio-cultural adjustments. This suggests that advisers may need to be open-minded, flexible and creative in developing outreach programs and tactics.

The international graduate students also expressed the importance of having an assigned person from the same department of study or same nationality, in order to facilitate the process of guidance during the short period of time that they have to get adapted to the new environment. Westwood & Barker (1990) suggest a program called “peer-pairing program”. This program pairs an international student with a student from the host culture with the purpose of helping international students adjust more successfully to the host culture.

Table 3: Orientation

People	Information	Process
Good support from International Students office (B,10)	Confusion about the campus (B,38)	No time, long process (D,23)
PALs good support (C,50)	No information about different expectations (H,85)	No coordination w/housing (H,27)
Other universities assign an alumni to international students (D,26)	No orientation about American culture (J,2)	No attendance, many activities at the same time (O,42)
No orientation from department (L,44)	Too much information in a short period of time (M,44)	No schedule coordination between international Student Office & Colleges (O,46)
No interaction between American & intern. students (M,39)	Lack of information about available jobs (N,31)	No orientation process in spring quarter (P,30)
Friends' support in immediate questions (N,28)	Lack of information about culture, ethical elements (tour around the campus) (O,4)	No organizations to help Int. Stud. for more than one day (K,19)
More important to communicate w/same nationality (O,44)	Lack of info about RIT location/ recreational areas in Rochester (P,28)	"Survival" feeling during first quarter (P,81)
Host family helps to socialize & relax (P,97)	Preference to receive information in native country (P,99)	Feeling guilty when asking questions (P,92)

✓ **Cross-cultural adaptation**

Table 4 reflects how the element “time” and the element “information” play an important role both before coming to RIT and during the first months at RIT. These two significant elements include expectations after coming to RIT, American culture/style of living and guidance after the first days of classes.

The need for language proficiency for Asian and Hispanic students was emphasized during the second focus group. This element of analysis extends beyond the challenge of being fluent in

day-to-day matters and is critical for establishing social contacts and engaging in social and cultural activities, as table 4 shows.

Adaptation is not a problem exclusive to foreign students. Domestic students also face problems when entering a new academic program or setting. But, for foreign students, these “normal” problems are compounded by new academic challenges, new customs, different living arrangements and styles, new forms and codes of social life and behavior, unfamiliar food, and foreign language with which they may not be sufficiently familiar to express themselves fluently at an academic level (Perrucci & Hu, 1995).

Table 4: Adaptation

Information	People	Time
Lack of information about process after coming to RIT (A,35)	No sensibility from the people who make the decisions (A,30)	Pressure of the quarter system (A,73)
Lack of information about "Life in America" (A,74)	No help after first days of orientation (A,75)	Importance of time in adaptation (G,85)
Lack of knowledge of new country/new culture (G,88)	Depressed (different expectations (E,3)	Hard to understand Americans speaking (G,89)
Feeling lost (H,29)	Support from Intern. Stud. Friendship (K,4)	Remembering reasons for studying abroad helps to reduce adaptation time (L, 17)
Studying abroad helps to get more experience of the world (L,40)	No associations to give tours to recreational areas (O,27)	Studying abroad very valuable (L,18)

The students' level of assimilation in the United States can also be improved by their learning assertive communication skills based on the fundamental premise that different modes of behavior can be properly used in different situations. The primary goal of the training model

proposed is to increase an understanding and repertoire of assertive behaviors in various cultural contexts.

✓ **Transportation**

Knowledge about different locations; weather conditions; distances among accommodations, colleges, grocery stores, department stores; time as an scheduling issue; and adaptation are the major elements that make transportation an essential service for international graduate students. Depending on availability, information and expenditure while using this service, international graduate students must have the opportunity to adapt in a short period of time (O,33; M,32; I,7; I,27).

Table 5: Off-campus Transportation

Convenience	Information	Schedule	Route
Bad locations of the shuttle stops (A,56)	Big support from International students (C,17)	No weekday services (B,15)	Re-design bus route (H,80)
Facility to go w/ roommates (E,33)	Support from bus driver (I,5)	No night off-campus buses (B,19)	No buses to go to attractions in Rochester (M,32)
Bad service (J,12)	Lack of knowledge about the process to follow (I,7)	No convenient schedule to go to Wegmans (D,18)	No transportation for off-campus apartments (P,52)
Very time consuming (L,26)	No one to contact for information about transportation (K,21)	No convenient schedule in Summer (I,21)	No transportation, no recreation (P,101)
Good system (P,6)	Awful feeling (L,20)	No convenient schedule (O,33)	No available shuttles on weekdays (I,27)

With the purpose of emphasizing the importance of transportation for international graduate students the author has divided this theme in two matrices (off-campus and on-campus). In this

way the reader can visualize in two different perspectives the same need “how to commute” and at the same time it helps to think better solutions for specific concerns.

Table 6: On-campus Transportation

Schedule/Route	Information
No convenience w/evening bus schedule (E,30)	No one to contact about transportation (I,20)
Preference to walk (H,50)	Lack of info about free buses' on-campus (P,3)
No convenient schedule in Summer (I,21)	Better adaptation process w/buses information (P,4)
Bus drivers don't follow schedule (I,23)	No information beforehand (P,19)
Dissatisfaction w/ routes during the breaks (L,24)	Lack of explanation about shuttle schedule (P,20)
Feeling scared, walking late at night (L,28)	American students know the process (P,21)
Not well connected with public buses (M,31)	Lack of information about schedules and routes (I,18)

✓ **Recreation**

Harvard educational psychologist Howard Gardner has found that scholastic knowledge "seems strictly bound to school settings" (1991, p. 122), while outdoor education fosters "connected knowing," where education is part of, rather than separate from, life. Unlike classroom learning, outdoor education uses the student's whole environment as a source of knowledge. The community, rather than the classroom, is the context of learning. In table 7, students expressed the relevance of interacting with other people (international students, faculty staff, American students, Host Families) to achieve a better assimilation of the environment.

In addition to the purpose described above, the international graduate students defined the purpose of recreation as a method “to make friends, so you won’t feel that you are alone, it is much better. Especially when you arrive here, you have so many differences if you arrive here

and you don't have friends you feel so lonely and hopeless. Also it can help to get familiar with the school and study quickly. If you settle down, then you can concentrate on study, right?" (L, 48, 49, 50). In interview O, the student defined the purpose of recreation as "...it basically brings everyone together, all the class. It relaxes you and you are socializing with the same students. Teamwork" (O, 64).

Table 7: Recreation

Information	Participation	Conditions	Variety
Students should ask for activities (A,67)	No interaction between faculty and students (A,59)	Activities very expensive (A,66)	Sports not focused on graduate students (A,64)
Lack of knowledge about international student activities(C,24)	No participation of International Students (E,40)	Not well connected to downtown (I,40)	Other universities more lively (C,28)
E-mail good source for promoting activities (C,25)	Leave the class quickly (F,63)	Reduced travel off-campus (J,29)	Activities just organized by Intern. Stud. Office (H,68)
No "cultural information" activities (K,24)	Preference to participate in RIT activities (J,31)	No convenient schedule for graduate students (L,36)	Work is only option (I,44)
No activities about American food/culture/history (L,51)	Standard of living very boring (K,27)	Gym good facility (M,38)	Dislike idea of staying in an empty/lonely room (J,38)
Lack of knowledge about concepts (P,10)	No time to use recreational area (N,40)	Need of place to socialize (O,59)	No recreational activities on weekends (P,100)
Facilities not very accessible (P,13)	Better assimilation while interacting with American friends (P,107)	Recreation needed during weekdays (O,62)	Only recreation: Wegmans/bank (P,102)

✓ Food

A healthy lifestyle is not defined solely by the food on—or not on—one's plate. Meals with friends and family, enjoying traditional foods, sampling the cuisines of other cultures, and incorporating physical activity into a regular routine are all part of a healthful way of life.

Modern dietary recommendations focus on ensuring an adequate intake of nutrients such as carbohydrates and fiber, while moderating others such as dietary fat, which may be linked to the development of chronic disease. The recommendations are largely summed up in *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. This publication was first developed in 1980 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services. The fourth edition issued in December 1995 advises:

- Eat a variety of foods
- Balance the food you eat with physical activity—maintain or improve your weight
- Choose a diet with plenty of vegetables, fruits, and grain products
- Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol
- Choose a diet moderate in sugars
- Choose a diet moderate in salt and sodium
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation

These guidelines are reviewed every five years and will be updated in the year 2000.

Presenting these facts recommended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services, and knowing that food is the international language of comfort, well-being and hospitality makes the elements expressed by the international graduate students in Table 8 more remarkable.

Table 8: Food

Convenience	Expenditure	Quality/Quantity	Variety	Information
RITZ schedule differs from eating times (B,24)	Not paying a little more for on-campus groceries (A,98)	Not healthy to eat wraps & burgers (E,23)	No native food offered (C,33)	Food is a second need to fulfill, housing is first (B,25)
Preference to buy grocery on-campus (D,12)	Food not worth money paid (C,32)	Food not very good (F,31)	Preference to eat Asian food (E,22)	Lack of information about corner store in dorms (C,20)
Cooking first choice for eating (F,24)	No option of buying food if it is more expensive (C,36)	Food without real taste (G,30)	More variety with fast food chain (F,38)	Lack of knowledge about the food (G,34)
Need of having a car to eat good food (F,29)	Eating at Cafeteria to save some time (E,19)	Food salty and dry (G,31)	Feeling of longing for home cooked food (H,46)	Bothering feeling while ordering food (G,35)
Preference to cook frozen food (I,32)	Convenient store in dorms very expensive (I,59)	Good choices for non-vegetarian people (N,22)	Dislike variety of food (I,33)	No board with the ingredients & directions for the food (G,41)
No available fast food chain on-campus (I,55)	Cafeteria food very expensive (K,10)	Everyday eating fruits, salad and sandwich (H,45)	Not comfortable eating non-veggie daily (I,35)	Lack of knowledge about meal plans (I,30)
Debit system very convenient (J,20)	Americans' complaint about the price (M,10)	American food: no differentiation of tastes (L,10)	Wish to try different food, not just American (K,14)	No one to describe American food (L,15)
Inconvenient cafeteria schedule at night (M,60)	One day of work is equal to one day of eating (M,15)	Good quality (N,20)	Preference for spicy food (M,18)	Lack of training in the cafeteria (O,6)
Convenience more important than money (O,61)	Not enough money to spend on food (P,70)	Quantity not equivalent to price (N,19)	Other universities provide international food (M,23)	No correct food budget for people living in apartments (P,59)

✓ Accommodation

The presence of international student groups presents a special opportunity to integrate learning and campus life. An Indian student association, an Islamic student center, or an African

student union, for example, can reinforce and augment the effort to train people to think and function in a multicultural environment. The design of integrated housing arrangements, such as traditional-language houses or houses organized around common academic or career interests can effectively join cognitive and experiential learning (Ping, 1999).

Although problems like finding affordable housing or a part-time job are not specific to foreign students, they are aggravated by unfamiliarity with the host society and limited skills in the host language. Landlords renting out private rooms are often prejudiced against potential tenants with unfamiliar customs. Other routes such as answering rooms-for-rent ads in writing are beset with similar problems. Table 9 shows how the assistance from the university, or some other specialized service such as an international student center, or an International House are often of crucial importance in easing the initial problem of getting installed and settled in.

Furnham and Bochner (1986) propose a self-determination oriented “cultural learning/social skill model” as a more adequate characterization of the foreign student’s intercultural transition experience. This view sees the major task of the stranger not as responding or psychological adjusting to the new environment, but as learning new social and cultural skills, which have prevalence in the new society.

Disman (1990) presents a relationship between educational institutions and the new social situations for the international students living on-campus. Considerable learning and adaptation is up to the individual student. Given the importance of involvement with the social environment, however, one implication for host institutions is that they should assist international students in helping with the difficult stages of getting adapted by facilitating the development of social networks. This position has been advanced by Biggs (1987), who argues, “it is an appropriate responsibility of the institution and its members to assure that opportunities are made available

for a variety of socialization activities and that new students are not left to become solely dependant upon their country colleagues for information and assistance” (p.76).

Table 9: Accommodation

Expenditure	Process	Convenience	Feelings	Information	People
Very expensive (A,50)	No accommodation beforehand (B,43)	Bad condition of the apartments (A,53)	No sensibility with international students (A,39)	Lack of information about different buildings (NTID) (H,6)	No option to ask parents for money (D,48)
Hotel expensive (H,13)	No training of staff in contact with overseas students (C,52)	Preference to live off-campus (P,53)	Scary feeling (B,13)	Not specific information where to send deposit (J,11)	Support from Campus Safety (H,5)
Finding roommate very expensive (K,6.)	No follow-up of housing form sent (C,53)	Staying in hotel (B,29)	Feeling of "terrible situation" (H,11)	Lack of information about apartments' characteristics (N,10)	Friends' support (L,8)
Off-campus cheaper (P,57)	Contract for one year, barrier to entry (P,49)	Riverknoll convenient location (D,16)	Horrible process (J,6)	Lack of information about assigning roommate process (P,15)	Independent roommate& house search (O,22)
Riverknoll rent like a new apartment (P,55)	Lack of coordination in roommate allocation process (O,20)	No place to live: off-campus only option (G,82)	Arriving "blind" (P,17)	No correct information about housing requirements (G,10)	Help to shift was provided (M,8)

Another element analyzed in table 8 is the financial aspects of the accommodation. The majority of the international graduate students rely upon personal savings whose value is diminished by exchange rates and inflation at home. This is compounded by an inability to obtain legal employment and steep increases in the cost of an American education. Sharif (1994) has addressed economic difficulties among these students. Although American students have experienced similar increases, many eventually qualify for much lower resident tuition.

Financial difficulties leave international students with poor alternatives: accepting a lower standard of living, seeking less costly schools, or returning home without completing their education. Finally, economic pressures limit the full participation of international students on American campuses and reduce the overall quality of American higher education. When they enter the American academic context, international students must also make personal and social accommodations, which often involve a loss of social status. Loss of social support and feedback can be devastating to students whose cultures have taught them to rely upon other people's attention and recognition. Furthermore, international students often find it difficult to re-establish their disrupted social support network or to maintain family ties (Akka, 1967; Huang, 1977).

✓ **Programming**

Information was one of the elements more discussed at the time of analyzing this theme. Many international students are more familiar with a highly organized lecture style of instruction, and closely monitored, systematic supervisors of their graduate programs. To those familiar with this pattern, the indirect and apparently uncontrolled nature of instructions in many North American graduate seminars is a shock (P, 79, 80).

Part of this cultural learning includes understanding classroom or seminar protocols in the new learning environment. Kao & Gansneder (1995) explained that without such understanding, it is difficult for new international students to know when, how, or what to contribute to discussions, thus impeding their active class participation.

According to Churchill (1987), host country institutions have seldom met the needs of foreign students, and institutional organization and program delivery have not often acknowledged or reflected the cultural diversity of the institution's international constituents. "We have accepted

cultural diversity” states Allmen (1990), “but we have not dealt with its implementation” (p.218). It is important then, that instruction and curriculum become attuned to the circumstances and characteristics of international students.

Another learning difficulty shown in Table 10 that is often experienced by international students is the practice by host academics of grounding concepts with practical examples derived solely from the host environment or culture (A,46; P,82). They may also find it difficult to know how to contribute to the subject of discussion when what they are able to bring to the discussion seems to be culturally irrelevant. Consequently, the common practice of interactive discussions in host academic institutions may actually function to stifle discussion, increase frustration and limit the benefits derived from discussion. International students find that they face the demands of a new and unfamiliar educational system (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986), which causes them confusion and frustration.

As we enter the new century, the business environment may be characterized as keenly competitive, global, technology-intense and dynamic. Management educators in business schools struggle to revise and update the curricula to produce graduates with the skills and abilities they need to enter the business world and contribute effectively to their organizations. This is clearly explained by international graduate students studying for an MBA (H,76).

Still, the business environment changes faster than curricula at colleges and universities because of the cumbersome process often involved in curriculum revision, including political posturing by operating entities and conflicting educational philosophies among faculty. That is the reason why Moore (1997) predicts that many business schools will not survive because many corporations are assuming a larger role in the education of their employees.

Table 10: Programming

Feeling	Process	Information	People
Time and money not useful (A,32)	No coordination between College of Business & Admission (A,2)	No BRIDGE program information (A,12)	Instructors with lack of knowledge (A,44)
Fear of failing in the class (A,49)	Wrong time to evaluate professors (A,47)	Be responsible for the information sent (A,40)	Some nice professors (A,94)
Interested just in money (B,62)	Classes based on personal experiences (A,46)	Convenient private computer lab. (C,37)	Rude responses (B,63)
Feeling of guilt (B,51)	Inflexible academic process (F,82)	RIT website w/insufficient information (E,50)	Advisers with flexible schedule (C,40)
Safe environment (C,39)	Not enough exposure to the industry (H,76)	No background information (E,51)	Preference to consult friends instead of advisers (D,42)
Different expectation about the program (D,3)	Lack of knowledge about courses (L,45)	Improve the material of classes (F,88)	Building reputation among colleagues (H,77)
Purpose of BRIDGE: increase time & courses (F,6)	College of Business: inconvenient schedule for full-time students (M,12)	Lack of info about education system (P,80)	Immense adjustment for Asian people (P,79)
Feeling of hard adjustment (P,77)	No clear way of communication (H,72)	Lack of knowledge about terms used in class (P,82)	Graduate students w/questions (E,49)

Many of the skills and abilities previously provided by management education and believed to lead to career success may not be applicable in the current, ever-changing environment. The critical attributes needed by business school graduates, desired by prospective employers, and taught by university faculty change as business adapts to changes in the operating environment.

✓ **Advisement**

Cadieux and Wehrly (1986) suggested that the culturally sensitive adviser demonstrates a cultural awareness, openness, and respect for different values, as well as tolerance for ambiguity, a willingness to learn, and a genuine concern for people with different values and from a

different cultural background. Although the willingness, openness, and positivity of the adviser's attitude are critical, they are not enough for cultivating a constructive helping relationship (F,75; M,51).

The adviser needs to develop a comprehensive cross-cultural competence that includes sensitivity, knowledge, and skills (Chen, 1995). Although it is important for advisers in colleges and universities to be adaptable and hospitable when advising international students (Locke & Velasco, 1987), they also need to have the knowledge (being aware of basic cultural norms in the client's culture) and the skills (being capable of building rapport) to interact with the student client. Without such knowledge and skills, cultural sensitivity is of limited effectiveness. As Liberman (1994) found, there are value-oriented and structure-oriented elements involved in classroom instruction. Liberman suggested that although Asian students enjoy the democratic teaching and learning atmosphere at an American university, they criticize the fact that the classroom communication tends to be informal and that professors are not treated with enough respect. This implies that international students find not only value differences but also different methods of pedagogy in their new learning environment (I, 53).

Table 11: Advisement

People	Process	Information
Instilling guilt feelings in students (A,101)	No coordination on time (B,59)	No knowledge about American companies (B,57)
Lack of sensible advisers in college (B,69)	Flexible advising (E,53)	No advising about future process (C,7)
No support from College of Business (F,73)	Wrong concept of counseling (F,75)	No advising when changing program (D,2)
Dean's support in registration (M,54)	Registrar unrelated classes (F,77)	Lack of knowledge of how to communicate with adviser (I,53)
Chairman support (P,98)	Decisions are made to benefit the college first, and the students second (M,51)	Good explanation about the process (J,28)

✓ Registration

The importance of this theme can be found at the time of selecting those courses that are only offered in certain quarters (O,38). Time is the major element to consider during the registration process. The best decisions will depend on time: time regarding receiving information about the process that should be followed by the student and time when receiving advising from the professors and instructors. Depending on the field of study, different classes would be offered in different quarters, but these classes could be registered for only if the international student receives the correct information on time about how to proceed with the registration and also when to get advice on which classes to register for (M,9; G,51; E,54; E,13, L,29, O,41) . The definition of registration will be included within the subtheme “information”, and the reason is that the knowledge about how to follow the process will be based on the kind of information received before the student arrives at RIT and after he/she arrives at RIT.

Table 12: Registration

People	Information	Process
Roommate support (E,13)	Confusion about selecting courses (M,9)	Bad registration process (E,54)
Dean's support (E,14)	No previous explanation about English process (G,51)	No possible registration (G,50)
Friend support (G,48)	Money & Time consuming in English classes (G,57)	No reply about requirements (G,60)
Support from adviser (I,51)	Lack of knowledge about the process (I,49)	Good process (H,24)
Possible assistance from senior students (L,46)	Lack of information about terms in registration (M,49)	Not enough time to registrar for classes (L,29)
No student collaboration is asked (M,47)	Many registration options after information was given (O,41)	No choice for registration (L,32)
Support from graduate assistant/chairman assistant (P,33)	Lack of info about SIS (P,86)	Unable to register for classes in second quarter (O,38)

✓ Telephone Service

Student affairs administrators and university administrators in general are quite aware that the new communications technology is having a profound influence on the way students, professors, administrators and staff lives, study, work, and do their business on and off campus. This is especially true for those who work with international students.

We are living through an unprecedented revolution on and off campus. Regarding the telephone, the changes in just a few years have been dramatic, affecting not only staff, faculty and administrators, but also domestic and international students (Grant, 1999). This is clearly described in Table 13 (A,88; D,52; O,30).

Direct long-distance dialing allows us to call India as well as Indiana--as long as you remember what time it is at the other end. This is as close as it comes to "instant communication." The cost for people in the United States is reasonable and the quality is usually excellent. Few of us may realize that telephone rates differ widely from country to country and that, comparatively, we in the United States enjoy relatively low rates. For this reason, people in other countries may not be calling us as frequently, conveniently, or inexpensively as we call them. Further, the clarity of sound is high, and echo, static, and fade-out have almost disappeared.

Table 13: Telephone

Information	Expenditure	Service
Lack of knowledge about international call service on-campus (H,66)	Time consuming (A,88)	No freedom to choose international calling service (A,8)
Concern about emergency calls to make (H,64)	Existence of cheaper services (D,52)	Support from friend in international calling service (O,30)

✓ Other services

This theme discusses many topics that don't fit precisely in another theme. But they play an important role for the international graduate students during adaptation to the RIT environment.

The analysis of this matrix contains two sections. The first section includes international students comments, literature review and the writer's opinion (A, 26; H, 70; P, 111). The second comprises only the international graduate students comments. The purpose of this categorization is to illustrate to the reader specific negative situations that happened with specific students, but could create a big impact in the image of RIT.

Table 14: Other Services

Information	Facilities
No support from CO-OP office (A,26)	Bad conditions of the computer lab (A,41)
No sense of belonging to RIT (A,103)	No food services in the library (B,67)
Needs of many people to carry and watch the food (A,57)	Use bus services for small services not provided in apartments (B,68)
Importance of Agencies in other countries (B,3)	Alumni network not maintained (F,100)
No explanation about health application problems (B,46)	Library inter-loan service very convenient (G,66)
Sense of converting native currency onto dollars (C,34)	No relationship w/ employers (H,70)
Lack of knowledge about associations' functions (G,79)	Bad quality of products (H,58)
Lack of knowledge about food in grocery stores (M,63)	No available grocery store/department store on-campus (I,58)
Not good links finding RIT in website (P,37)	No language help for Int. Stud. (K,25)
Lack of info about processes delay time of adapting (P,109)	Lack of available cheap stores (O,58)
Understanding barrier "symbolic language" (P,111)	RIT website helped to get knowledge about campus (L,38)

It has been pointed out by authors like Chambers (1994) that language and words are not signifiers so much as they are interpretations imposed by those who have the power to privilege their interpretations. Socio-linguistic knowledge includes the ability to understand the use of certain words, phrases, communication patterns, and non-verbal gestures as they are given contextual meaning within the host society (P,111). International students' lack of familiarity with the new socio-cultural environment in which knowledge and communication patterns are constructed and defined puts them at a particular disadvantage with respect to understanding, applying and interpreting knowledge in the host academic setting (Vogt, Jordan & Tharp, 1993).

To ensure the best future use of international students' unique and enriching educational experiences in the United States, developing career and life planning skills is indispensable. Advisers should encourage the students to constantly seek information about career opportunities both in the United States and in their home countries through newspapers (from their home countries), professional journals (in their native languages), in-depth conversations with fellow nationals, and the Internet (A, 26; H,70). Farid, (1982) approached this topic by explaining that once their long-term career goals are tentatively established, the effectiveness of these goals needs to be repeatedly assessed throughout their stay in the United States, taking into account their educational and occupational histories, visa status, acculturation levels, English competency and the characteristic behavioral expectations of prospective employers.

Conclusion

This chapter has produced a large amount of information for the reader to consume. The next chapter makes recommendations and suggests ideas for the future.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

There are several ways that the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) might address the socio-cultural and socio-linguistic needs of international students. Rather than focusing predominantly on advising international students as to what they need, RIT could make more of an effort to discover, understand and address the needs expressed by such students themselves.

New approaches to new services and processes must be continually questioned and challenged if RIT wants to survive in the rapidly changing marketplace. This qualitative research proposes future possibilities to build a strong relationship between international graduate students' recruitment and retention and the level and quality of the services they receive. Consider the following questions for future research:

- How are adequate services for international graduate students to be created and financed?
- How can the various aspects of students services including housing, health, cultural adaptation, advisement, recreation, etc, be more effectively coordinated?
- How can more effective partnership with other players involved with international graduate students be established?
- How can administrative staff resources be used more effectively in the recruitment and admission process?
- How can American students as well as international graduate students be more effectively involved?
- How can cultural awareness and sensibility of students, faculty and staff be improved?
What kind of training programs can be put in place to facilitate this?
- Are the programs being marketed the most appropriate ones for the emerging global marketplace and what changes or adjustments are required in order to help international graduate students in the process of finding a job?

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Information

Based on the findings and analysis of the interviews, there are certain kinds of information the international graduate students should receive before arriving at RIT to promote/support successful assimilation of the new environment.

There is a need for comprehensive, up-to-date and honest information about what the Rochester Institute of Technology has to offer, and what services are in place for international graduate students. Although informational material cannot address all possible questions or situations international students may face, it is essential that RIT provide this information in a more detailed format and specifically created for international graduate students.

There are many differences between international undergraduate students and international graduate students. Among the differences in procedure are admissions, enrollment, programs, courses, and prerequisites. But the most essential difference is the factor “time”. Because of the short time that international graduate students have to get adapted to the new environment, it is necessary for them to receive precise information, quickly. This includes details about the health and social services available, religious institutions and services, cultural associations, transportation and specific food services, accommodations and recruitment requirements. In addition, as international graduate students are quite heterogeneous, and with different motivations/expectations, different types and versions of materials are required to inform and prepare potential foreign students for their arrival in the new country.

There are different ways to provide this information, but the best way would be to involve graduate students from different countries in the process of creating bulletins, brochures and pamphlets that are sent overseas. Using their creativity and their specific knowledge about

cultures, economies and needs derived from their own experiences, the information will be provided in a way that is comprehensible to foreigners not familiar with the American system of education.

There are two kinds of information that international graduate students need to know at the time of getting started in the process of studying for a Master's degree at RIT. First, international graduate students need personalized advice. This personalized service consists of assigning international students already enrolled in a specific program (with one or two quarters remaining to complete their degree) to prospective international students while they are in their native country and also to international students who are already registered for classes at RIT. Receiving personalized contact in their secure environment (native country) will guarantee the retention of that prospective student; advising by currently enrolled students will assure a positive performance during the adaptation process to the new environment (RIT).

There are essential pieces of information that should be given to students while they are in their native country and when they arrive at RIT. This includes living expenses, registration, accommodation, recreation, program, legal status, transportation and all the questions that could emerge at any given time. There is other specific information that should be provided to new students beforehand, and this is related to resources (name of books) that will be used in a particular program. The reason for this will be based on different values of the currency in different countries. For example, if students have the opportunity to buy their books in their own currency, it may be much cheaper buying those books in their native country than in the United States.

It is important to emphasize that in the peer-paring relationship, the peer student will be responsible only to give information to guide the new student in the process of getting adapted,

as an adviser, but it wouldn't be his/her responsibility to solve all the problems that may emerge during the first quarter that the new student is at RIT. The reason for this specific explanation that the peer-student (the student who will guide the new student) will only "give advise the new student" is that international graduate students need to learn from the beginning to solve their problems by themselves. Otherwise, these international graduate students will always wait for help from everybody and be unable to make decisions on their own.

Second, international graduate students need advice from students who have already graduated from the same program. These alumni could be American or international students. The reason for this statement is that by coming from a different culture and by having different work experience, international graduate students feel confused about American expectations within the work environment. It is important that alumni get in contact with new international graduate students during the first quarter in order to guarantee that new students know from the beginning what is expected of them, and also to convey a sense of the academic climate and extra-curricular life at RIT. Moreover, these alumni can draw a tightly realistic picture of the adjustment required regarding personal lifestyle.

The research also indicates that knowledge about food is a critical component that should be included in the orientation process, to ensure good adjustment with the American society. This includes training the personnel at the cafeteria and the students at RIT about other cultures and food habits, showing all the ingredients that comprise each dish at the cafeteria, and promoting programs regarding "nutrition and day-to-day life in other nations".

The purpose of offering information about this theme is to avoid misunderstanding among cultures, and to offer a wide-ranging education among the students and staff that are involved in the cafeteria and all around RIT. In addition, it is a necessity that RIT offer more variety in the

menu for vegetarian and non-vegetarian international students, and also a reasonable price for the food that is bought, taking into account the heterogeneous group that eats at the cafeteria.

Transportation is another service that requires change before international students arrive to RIT. This information is indispensable because the adjustment time for international graduate students will decrease or increase depending on the availability and convenience of a commuting system. According to this research, a good commuting system offers on-campus transportation, to other facilities off-campus, flexibility in the schedule, and the routes that buses should follow. In addition, RIT could help international graduate students have a positive experience by starting with the students' pick up at the airport a couple of days before orientation day and getting briefed on local transportation to the grocery store and to recreational area around the Rochester area for the day. Driving lessons, help with buying cars, help with auto insurance and auto repairs are also extremely important.

RIT provides an excellent service in its website, but it should give more promotion to this website so international students can get more familiar with the different services that are offered by RIT. Otherwise, students will simply think that RIT does not provide any kind of service for them; when the real problem is that RIT does not have a good channel to inform students about all the benefits that they can tap into by being part of the RIT community.

Language preparation

The difficulties involved in achieving familiarity with the language of the host country are often not apparent even to well informed students prior to their departure for the host country. Mastering the everyday language is not sufficient, and a certain degree of familiarity with the "symbolic" language and with the social and cultural contexts of key academic terminology is a prerequisite for foreign graduate students, especially in the humanities and social sciences. This

is not normally learned in language preparatory classes, nor is it tested comprehensively in TOEFL type exams.

As the interviewees have personally experienced, possessing this additional level of language is a necessity for successful graduate level studies. As a consequence, it would be beneficial for prospective students to receive some guidance and advice ahead of time, for example, in the form of course outlines and reading lists in their intended fields of study. This would permit students to familiarize themselves with some of the principle concepts and symbolic language before actually arriving and starting their programs.

1. Social interaction

The need for students to become actively involved with their social environments to overcome the feeling of isolation is critical. Considerable social involvement will take place at the initiative of the students themselves, but this can be arranged either by the international student office, graduate student associations or individual college departments.

Specific programs for foreign students should include individual host family or pairing schemes to match incoming foreign students with host students or families familiar with the academic life of the institution. Such arrangements are not only helpful for the international students on a personal basis, but important instruments for lowering the barriers to successful adjustment and learning.

2. Academic assistance

Once students have arrived and started their programs, academic assistance should normally be provided by academic supervisors or by faculty in general. Support and help with academic matters should also be provided informally by the students' peer group, especially other foreign students. Available academic assistance may not be sufficient, especially if instructors and

advisers lack familiarity with students' particular cultural backgrounds and languages.

Therefore, it is advisable to make special arrangements, for example, by organizing seminars targeted to those international graduate students at the beginning of their studies to provide a general outline of the foundations of the field. This would be an opportunity for faculty and students to engage in dialogue about the schools of thought, approaches, and academic traditions that prevail in both host and home countries. This assistance in making academic transitions to develop effective study skills is crucial. For example, by exploring those differences between the educational systems in the United States and in their native countries: academic credits, grading scales, class attendance, class discussions, and types of frequent quizzes, examinations, presentations, and assignments, can significantly reduce their anxiety about the American educational system.

3. Learning process

Encouraging rather than pressing is the best methodology to motivate verbal participation among international graduate students who come from cultures where it is prohibited to speak out in a classroom. This would allow the student time to develop an understanding of contexts and to find a comfort level at which they might express themselves.

Placing all students in small discussion groups can provide a setting where international students are able to express themselves more readily, and check the reception of their ideas and expressive method with a few students, before venturing ideas before the larger group. To develop an understanding of the American academic writing style, international graduate students could work together with the American students in some course papers. Instructors should also check exam questions for examples where their meaning depends only upon American-specific context. In addition, these instructors should cultivate instructor-student

relationships because most of the time this approach is not as explicit for international graduate students as it is for American students.

After discussing benefits in the instructor-student relationship, it is also important to explain some of the benefits in the peer-pairing relationship. For example, although peers in the peer-pair relationship can learn many things (culture, lifestyle) from each other, the peer from the host culture may play a more active role in assisting the peer from another culture (the international graduate student) in coping with daily routine adjustments. The host culture peer may function as a friend, an information provider, a consultant, and a facilitator-helper in the relationship.

There are certain policies that should be considered when creating a peer-pairing program:

1. The international student office in coordination with the different colleges at RIT and different associations that provide services on-campus should utilize good planning and organization in order to achieve the specific purposes of this program: helping international graduate students to get adapted to the new environment in a short period of time and at the same time preparing a cost effective plan.
2. Advisers and the international student office need to put more effort into promoting and recruiting for this program. As the students made clear in the interviews, there is a preference to participate in a peer-pairing program with international students from the same program, and a second preference for international students from the same country. This kind of program could be promoted as a part of an on-campus job. The available positions would be filled by international graduate students who have successfully integrated within the RIT community.

3. After planning, organizing and promoting, extensive training of the peers should occur. This training would be based on developing their communication skills, responsibilities, limits and advantages of working in a peer-pairing program.
4. A follow-up of the processes and development of this peer-pairing relationship should continue in order to ensure the right outcome from the international graduate students (to be successful in their professional and social life).

These four steps will assure that the purposes of the peer-pairing program are achieved.

First, good adaptation process from the international graduate students will be reflected by their performance in their classes; second, cost effective results will be shown by an increased percentage in recruiting and retaining the international graduate students at RIT; third, promoting new on-campus services (diverse and economic food, affordable and comfortable accommodation, convenient transportation, multiple recreational activities, flexible advising, and available jobs) for international graduate students will encourage more understanding behavior from all the staff who work along with international graduate students. In addition, assigning an international graduate student who is in the third quarter of his/her program to a particular person will guarantee that specific questions will be answered by the right person, without spending unnecessary time and money.

Formerly, the international students' grapevine widely circulated information on campus in a matter of days. As the Internet means virtually instantaneous communication, weak programs and services for international graduate students could be known worldwide in hours, if not minutes. To successfully recruit international students, RIT needs well-run international programs with ethical and professional staff.

Of course, these new processes will change old methods of providing information at RIT, and as any other change that has to be made, changes at RIT related to international graduate students will require patience from all the faculty, alumni and staff involved with this process.

By providing two kinds of informational support (while the international students are in their native country and while they are on-campus) international students will perceive the attention that is given to their needs and, as a result, the percentage of international graduate student recruitment will increase on a large scale. That is the enormous power of the “word of mouth” concept. Changes made at the right time can create a positive impact and make better use of the time, money and effort invested by both international graduate students, and RIT as an educational and financial institution.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Nationality	Major	Age
Bulgarian	MBA	26
Chinese	MBA	24
Chinese	Computer Integrated Manufacturing	25
Chinese	MBA	24
Indian	Computer Integrated Manufacturing	23
Indian	MBA	23
Indian	MBA	24
Indian	Information Technology	22
Indian	Computer Science	24
Indian	Information Technology	25
Indian	Computer graphic design	23
Indian	MBA	24
Indian	Computer engineer	23
Indian	MBA	26
South African	Hospitality Tourism Management	31
Taiwanese	Hospitality Tourism Management	28
	Age Average ≈	25

APPENDIX B**Interview A****Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT**

I won't say it was very pleasant. It was in fact extremely unpleasant and the reason was because my program was all missed up. College of Business gave me wrong information and the Apartment Housing didn't have anything coordinated (2). In fact, when I was still in India, after I sent the money accepting the confirmation of admission to RIT, I didn't hear anything from RIT. There was no information. So I arrived here without a place to stay, with no information of where I was staying, and without a program. The College of Business withdrew the program two years ago, but they sent me false information about that, so I had to go to the OMBUDS person, RIT OMBUDS person.

The OMBUDS person?

OMBUDS person is who works directly under the offices of the president of RIT. That person is basically responsible for solving student issues, and helping students. That is after you have approached your college and other administrators' officers, and they can't help you with that. In fact, that was so bad, there was a person in the College of Business who told me to either take it or leave it (7). I could take what they were offering or simply leave RIT, anyway that went on. They refused to recognize my degree from my country, India, for which I had to pay and get an evaluation done, which later I asked them to pay me back for.

So you came here without any information, but you said that you had selected an MBA program. Tell me more about it.

This is exactly what happened. I was admitted to the Masters' program. I was sent information for the masters program but that program had been withdrawn two years before, so they sent me wrong information.

Who sent you that information? The Admissions department?

No, College of Business, directly. So when I came here they told me that the program had been withdrawn, and I was admitted to the BRIDGE program (12).

BRIDGE program?

The BRIDGE program is the way you do some courses because they don't recognize your degree from your country. You have to take some undergraduate level courses, to bring you to a graduate level. That means six more months of courses basically. So they wanted me to do the BRIDGE program and then do the MBA program, instead of the International Business Program. I already have an MBA from India, so I was like ... I didn't want to do the BRIDGE program, and they sent me wrong information. They said. "Sorry, this is all we can offer to you, take or

leave". So I told them, "listen, I left everything that I had in my country to come here to study, so please don't tell me take it or leave it", that is not the way to behave but they didn't hear anything. So finally they asked me to get my degree from India evaluated. By this evaluation you pay a fee for evaluate your courses you have done. So they evaluated it and they told me I have an equivalent of US Masters. So I went back to the College of Business and I said, "look I have my evaluation certificated, now what?" So they said, "sorry, the master's program have been withdrawn two years ago, we can upgrade you to an MBA program". Now the MBA program is eighteen months, and the masters program is 12 months. So I don't want to spend all that amount of money and time to do this. So I said "sorry, I want the masters program, you sent me the wrong information, you guys messed up, you guys have to redeem it". They were not willing to hear, so I went to the OMBUDS person (in the SAU), so I guess she spoke to some people, so the College admitted me into the Masters program. That was in the first two weeks here at RIT, so it was extremely unpleasant, and the housing apartment screwed up everything because when I sent the acceptance of admissions, if you remember you have to send a deposit of \$200 dollars, and then they say, "after you send us the money, we will send you information about the apartment housing", so after that I didn't hear anything from them.

So, you sent the money...

Yes, I sent the money and there wasn't any information after that. I had no clue where I was supposed to stay. Nothing. So when I came here I spoke to the apartment housing people, and they said, "sorry, you are not registered for the apartment". I said, "Sorry, I sent you the money, and you didn't send me information about that". So it was a big mess. Finally, I got the apartment, after about three or four days of being here.

So, where were you staying?

With few friends, basically. Not even friends. I have been in touch with them by e-mail, so they were very kind to support me for sometime.

When you went to Residence Life and you asked for the apartment, what did they do to find your information?

They didn't have my information in the computer, they were trying to look manual forms, and for some reason they didn't have me in the system. Then they found the form and the money. The money has to be there; otherwise they wouldn't send me the I-20. Oh...that is another thing, my I-20 actually says "Master's of International Business"...and when I came here they refused to recognize that. They said, "the BRIDGE program", so anyway, that was a whole new story, in fact I was considering lawsuit RIT ...so anyway, I didn't. It was extremely unpleasant to the extreme that that slowed me down because even after my master's program, they don't have a program like this, where they put me up, and which is meant that: a) I am doing the same courses that a person in the MBA program is doing, which means that is very basic, as far I am concern, b) this guys in the College of Business have very little coordination in the CO-OP and placement office, which means that at the time of finding a job, it is not very helpful (26). In fact, if I would look it, in the long term, I have actually not gained by being at RIT. I don't know, the fact that I have an MBA from India has been more value for me than the fact that I have a master's

from RIT. So, in fact, it has been a regression, as far as I am concern. So still I am wondering, should I sue RIT or not... but anyway, so that is basically it. The funny thing is that the people don't understand that when you are an international student you don't know how the process works, you don't know what the procedure is and you left everything behind. They don't have the sensibility to understand, and that was really sad. A lot of people do, a lot of people do, but then those people don't make decisions. The people who actually make decisions are so busy that they really don't care (30). That is really bad. Another thing is that I went to the OMBUDS person and report everything to that person, I feel that administrators in the College of Business are a little bit upset about this, so they have this kind of behavior with me, you know...it is kind of reflective over the past nine months.

So, what kind of degree are you going to get after that?

Master's in International Business. I will get the degree, but that is not what I chose. So, essentially if I look it up, all the money and time that I have put over here are really not useful (32). I know it sounds all negative, but that is how I feel about RIT, really; to the extent, that I am not going to recommend RIT to anybody. There are friends of mine who have being talking to me about applying to colleges, and I have actually said, "Don't apply to RIT". Apply there or there, but not to RIT. When I go out, into the job world or whatever, I am not definitely ... I mean...I don't feel talking nice about RIT because it's not treating me well. I don't have the feeling: "oh, RIT is my college". I don't feel that way. It is sad but it is true.

So what would be your advice?

Information. They need to be absolutely sure that they give the correct information to the people who live overseas.

Information about?

Information saying exactly what is going to happen. For example, when they say, "this is the program that we are admitting you into", make sure that the student is going to come in, knows that this is the program and tells that when you come in this is what is going to happen (35). For example, "after you pay us the \$200 dollars of confirmation, we will send you the package with the information", and make sure that the package is sent (38). Don't expect that the student arrive here with nothing, with no place to stay and then deny a housing. That is not the way it works. They just have to be a little more sensitive to a person who comes from a different country (39). It's fine, most of us speak English pretty well, you know, most of us can understand what they are saying, but then if they don't give us information, it really doesn't work. The other thing is that if they actually have published something and send the information to students saying this is how the program works and the courses, they actually have to go through with it (40). They cannot say, "Well, this is all we can offer, take it or leave it". That is not definitely the way it works because as far as I am concern, I am not going to recommend anybody to come to RIT.

What other service should be modified?

Even something so basic as the computer lab. The computer system keeps crashing over there in the College of Business (41). You are working in a project during few hours, and you try to save it, and the system crashes, and it's all gone, and you have to work in the entire thing again. You know something so basic like that. It is supposed to be the College of Business!!

Something else, there are very few professors who are very good, very approachable, very helpful, very very nice, but then there are few professors who really don't know what they are talking about. It is really unfortunate because students just don't expect that.

Tell me more about that situation with the professors.

Imagine, some of them don't even know about the concept, most of those people are just visiting faculty. They don't know what they are talking about. They are not very serious about what they are teaching us, and the books that they recommend us are extremely basic (44). If I would actually compare a similar course that I did in my MBA and the one that I did here at RIT, the one that I did in my country is much much advanced; there is just not comparison. For example, there is a professor, it was something really basic, it is like saying, you know, that ten follows nine in the number series, it was something so basic. So this professor put up a transparency, and she misquoted something. It was right there on the transparency, and she didn't realized what she had done. She went on with it, and she went on and on with it, until a student actually quoted it out to her. And all she would talk about in the class was her experience in a country that she hasn't visited it yet, and that is about it. And that was the entire course (46). You know...

We have students' evaluations. What happened with that?

Obviously, but the evaluation happen after the course is over. As far as I am concern, for me that course was over, it is already there in my transcript. I cannot take the same course with another professor. So even if you give an honest evaluation or whatever I think of that course, but it is only after everything is done (47). And she is still teaching it.

Do you know how other of your classmates feel about that situation?

Yes, actually all of us said the same things in the evaluation. The unfortunate thing was that the evaluation is separated. But if you think about complaining...one of the guys in the class spoke to the Dean's office, and the Dean's office just reply, "sorry, that's all we can offer". The problem is that if you complain it reflects on your grades because they go to the professor (49). So that is why people don't complain. There were just six or seven students in that class, and one of them went to the Dean's office and that was what they told him: "that's what we can offer".

Tell me your experience about the accommodations, after they assigned you the apartment.

I don't know about other apartments because I live in Riverknoll, and you live in Riverknoll too, right? I had lived in the two and three bedrooms apartment, and they charge a lot of money for the kind of services that they don't provide (50). In the sense that Riverknoll is a pretty large

complex, so you have this small laundry room, which is somewhere in the center, so think in the person who has to hold his/her clothes from one end to the laundry center. At least they could have another center room to service the entire complex. Also the apartments are also falling apart, you know, Riverknoll is falling apart, the carpets are old and dirty, the floor is bad, the shelves are coming off (53). It is really not funny for the amount of money that we are paying as students; it's really not fair. It is like living in the dorms. That's not how it should be, basic standards of living is not that.

The fact that new students that comes in, they don't know how to buy in Wegmans, they don't know, simple things like, shopping for cereal, how to pick that cereal up, in terms of prices because shopping in American stores is very different than in India, it is very different. I am not saying you have to hold our hands, but if you take a group of people, for let's see for the first time and just basically show them an hour, and let them be free after that, they will be fine. You know, most people have that level of intelligence to handle it after that.

The fact of the shuttle. It is like I said, it is accessible but it drops you up to the point where you have to spend so much time walking (56). I remember, we used to go shopping in Wegmans, maybe five people together, and we used to have a lot of things to carry. We used to stand where the shuttle stops, so two people used stand in the bus stop, and you know, keeping the bags and collecting them (57). You know, making two and three trips back from the bus stop to the apartments, just to transport stuff, so you don't feel like doing groceries ever again.

What did you do after that?

So by then I guess I came to know people who had cars, so it was more convenient, and I started driving, so it was more convenient. I think they should do something to promote interaction between staff and students, between faculty and students because it is not enough that you just go to a class, see the professor and walk out of classes and forget about it (59). You should actually know your professor. You know that sense of interaction should be there.

You have to have cultivated sense of belonging, you know when a person passes out of RIT, the person should actually feel, "yes!! I pass out of RIT, I did something at RIT, and I know this person at RIT". Some professors and staff at RIT, after you deal with them in one quarter, the next quarter when they walked in front of you they just look through you. They don't stop even and say hi; you say hi and they just walk past and you feel so foolish. RIT should have some kind of cultural activities and maybe invite them. Maybe make it more formal, invite some professors.

I know that College of Business tries to do a lot of things but that's primarily for undergraduate students, they don't really manage to get graduate international students involved. They manage these programs for undergraduates because they are here for four years; they have more time to get involved.

The other thing I have never been able to understand is why RIT doesn't focus in sports. That is really one way to get people together, you know, having a common game, can definitely make people come together.

But RIT is very involved in sports, for example: hockey, ice skating...

Yeah, but look at it this way, all of those sports the majority involved are undergraduates, you know primarily because undergraduates have four years to participate (64). But when you talk about graduate international students, they don't understand too much about the game of baseball, don't know about the rules of football are, the rules of ice hockey are, you know, they can watch it, try to understand it, but they need some help with understanding the game because unless you understand the rules you won't enjoy the game. I know that what sometimes they do is to organize tickets for a special game in Buffalo, or some other game in other place, but how many students will actually be interested in paying that kind of money because when you come here \$30 or \$35 bucks is a lot of money, which converted in rupees would be 1300 or 1400 rupees. It is a lot of money, and to expect students spend that kind of money to go to a game that you don't know much about; and in the middle of the game you won't ask the next person what is happening because that person is enjoying the game, too (66). So, I don't know, if they have so simple as a game inside of RIT, a team, RIT's team and you ask the people to join it in that game, that would give you a sense to understand the game, and then take them to Buffalo. That is another thing.

How do you think RIT should contact you for those activities?

No, actually it's a couple of things, actually should go both ways, like we guys should also try to find what's happening in terms of getting fun, that is for sure (67).

Where do you think the students can find that information?

That is the key, information. I mean something so basic as information about your course program, about apartment doesn't happen, doesn't come to you, so when you come here you try to get that organized, you are trying to find where you are going to stay, you are trying to know how to go for grocery shopping, you are trying to know what courses work you have to do, how it is done in America, how programs are actually in America, in all that, it is a quarter system, in all that the time taken is so much that the quarter is almost gone by, then you start getting involved in the new courses stuff, and your studies, your midterms, projects, so very few students actually have the time to go outside of that to find out recreational, sports, other activities, etc (73). It is a little sad, so if you actually have some kind of a system, maybe having an information packet that is handed it to students when they come here, like we have an orientation day where we learn ok, this is the College of Business, these are the papers that you have to fill out or whatever and it will give you a map of the school or whatever. But also they should handle an information packet that says ok, these are the upcoming activities and these are the facilities available to understand those activities. For example, you have interpreters for NTID students, so you should have people who can help people from other countries understand what the American life is all about. Studies are not a big deal, what make it difficult is living in America (74). So if you have some kind of a system where you can find information that says, "ok, if you want more information contact such and such person", and that person is actually available to answer those questions, that would help. Like the PALS, that is a good system, let's see now, but I haven't really seen the PALS very effective in the Graduate program, I don't

know why that is, but I haven't seen them being very effective, somehow they just help in the first days of the orientation (75).

I am looking this situation as a graduate student prospective because that is what I can understand best, because if you live here for four years you will begin to understand, you will definitely have to be take part on it, but a graduate student comes only for a year and at the most eighteen months, that's it. Given that short period of time you try to handle your courses, but how much will you do to get out of it. I mean I agree you should do a lot. But then time just rushes in a quarter system. So that is the whole thing.

What about the food service on-campus?

The food is not a problem really. It is not a problem because initially it is just the fun of trying something new, but eventually everybody settles down and just does his/her own things. We eat out a lot.

Where?

Definitely not in the cafeteria, it is very expensive. We usually go to the Chinese buffet or some other buffet. Outside is better.

Do you think it is better to go off-campus than to come here?

This is a little more convenient because it is on-campus, but if you pay five and a half or six bucks for just a dish plus the drinks, it is better to go to the Chinese buffet where you pay six bucks for lunch and seven for dinner and you have a lot of more variety.

But you have to have car for that.

Yes, initially that is the reason why the people either cook at home or go to the cafeteria as the last option. I don't think I used to come to the cafeteria in the beginning, probably once or maybe twice. I found this so expensive that I never came after that. Besides, the food in the cafeteria is a little bit boring after sometime because that is all what they have, sandwiches, burgers and stuff, so it gets boring after sometime.

Do you prefer another kind of food?

I will prefer more variety in food.

What do you mean by "more variety on food"?

In the sense of have more fast food available which you know it is not going to be very repetitive, have a Taco Bell somewhere, have McDonalds somewhere, well I am not a fan of McDonalds, have something on-campus which is different, which is not very expensive. Let's put it that way because after the sale price you have to pay sale taxes so the final price become very high.

So you said that you like Taco Bell and McDonalds...

Well, I don't agree with that kind of food because I don't like McDonalds, but if you look at it, it offers more variety, that is all I am trying to say, it offers more choice, for example this stupid thing only Pepsi on-campus, why you should limit my choices? If I want to have a Coke, I should be able to have Coke. Why should I just buy Pepsi and Pepsi products on-campus? Just because Pepsi pays tons of money to RIT doesn't mean that RIT should limit my choices...

Ah, something else, RIT apparently has this contract with AT&T for long distance service on-campus, but when we came we signed with MCI because earlier students have told us that MCI service is good and all. So we signed with MCI. It worked for one day, and then it was off (88). Then we tried to find out what happened. They told us that AT&T has a contract with RIT, that means that you can only take AT&T on-campus, now the thing is that AT&T offers a long distance service to India off-campus which is fifty five cents a minute, and monthly fee five dollars or something like that (89). But on-campus they told us that they cannot give us that, that they will give us a dollar twenty five a minute with the same monthly fee. But we ask them, "you offer the same plan off-campus, so what is the difference. The fact that we live on-campus doesn't mean it would be a different plan", so they said. "Sorry you are students on-campus, that is what we can offer". So, you know, the point that we are students' on-campus, you shouldn't charge us much more. Finally we had a big long argument with AT&T, it last almost two months to get the long distance service, and we kept getting bounce back from one to another and apparently they decided to give us a credit check to give us the price of fifty five cents. Now you don't know all that when you come to the country, and we don't have credit history...so anyway we got long distance service and it was bad, and it had to be by AT&T because MCI was blocked. So, eventually what happened was that the service and the connections were extremely so bad so that we had to get it cut. Now I am using calling cards. I don't use AT&T.

That is an additional thing, when you come here, and you try to call home and you can't call them because you don't have long distance service provider, and suddenly you realize that the service you want to choose is not available because RIT has blocked up. So it doesn't make sense. It is supposed to be a free country. I mean I don't know...

Let me think of something pleasant that had happened at RIT, everything sounds so negative...a couple of professors were very nice (94).

What about getting seasonings from your country?

In the sense?

You said that you like to cook...

Oh, yes, what happened is that my parents send some stuff with someone that is traveling from Delhi and I have some family in the USA and they send me things and stuff like that, and there is an Indian market here, so we go there and we buy our groceries and spices there. That is how we

manage it basically. If you talk about of providing those things on-campus, I don't know how that will work because for that you need a sizable population to be able to buy that.

Do you know this market outside of RIT, near to University Commons? Well, they sell things that you have to buy if you have an emergency, but then those are very expensive, when you go to Wegmans and you buy milk for ninety nine cents, the same thing here is a dollar twenty. So I don't know, there are a lot of Indians here, which why I guess what happen is that most of us go together when we go for shopping, so we try to help each other with the car or whatever, so you tried to stay together.

The other thing is that in the Indian community you try to do a lot of things together: you cook together, you try to meet people together, good or bad, I don't know, but it happens. But something is for sure; it maintains the sense of belonging, the customs from your country. That is sadly lucky, you don't have much interaction. I don't know if you have felt in that way before. You go to the school, you talk to these people, you have a school day, but at the end of the school day they don't know you, and the next quarter they don't even say HI to you, which is like... excuse me...it feels a little bad, so I don't know.

Would you agreed to pay a little more for your groceries, for example the milk, instead of ninety nine cents in Wegmans maybe pay a dollar five, a dollar ten?

You know, that is fine if you are getting for that price; it is ok. That is not a problem. The real problem is that because all the other things that happen, RIT doesn't know how to treat international students well, for example, they screw up sending the information about the courses they offer you, they don't build the sense of belonging, all that together, you cannot choose your own long distance provider, you cannot choose what you drink (98). If you put all that together, you think, "Why are they doing this everywhere?" Everywhere you go you feel cheated, everywhere you look at it. And then you say, "Ok, ninety nine cents in Wegmans, and a dollar five here, why should I pay it to RIT, forget about it, I just go to Wegmans, even if I have to wait until tomorrow". It is a small form of protest but it is. That's the way it is. If you have five things and three of those things go right, you can overlook the other two and say that the majority went well, right? But if four go wrong, and go wrong every time you do it, what I am doing here? So, that is how unfortunately it is here.

For example, I wanted to finish my course work in one year, I wanted to finish my master's, but after nine months when I finished all my courses I spoke to Lily and Lily told me that I could do the optional CO-OP, and when I spoke to the people in the College of Business they were like... "Why are you creating such a lot of trouble?"...I was like... "I just want to go on a CO-OP. There is a certain opportunity that is coming up, which might lead to a full-time job, so actually is good for me"...and then they told me, "you were the one who wanted to finish the program early, you were the one who wanted to do this, why are you changing the program, impact all the schedule that we set up for you?". I said, "look, you are supposed to be working here on my interest, you know, you are supposed to be helping the students, not telling the students that they are a pain".

Where did you get that information?

From the academic adviser office in the College of Business. Eventually she agreed, but she told me that I am causing trouble, that I am unnecessary changing the program. I said, “look, if it helps me is actually useful, and if it is legal I can do it, and it is legal and this is what I want to do because if it gives me experience that is well worth it”. She made a big face and then she said, “well... Ok, let me know exactly what is going to happen”, and this is the reason why I feel that because of the fact that I took them to the OMBUDS person, they have a stick against me. But anyway, I am really careless because I don't care about RIT very much. To the extent that that I am here, I have to live with this; otherwise, I will be going soon, it is fine. It really hurts when somebody tells you that you are causing a lot of trouble when you are not (101). You just want to find your way and do stuff. So I feel a little bit let down, and the other thing is that being an international student you pay a hell a lot of money to be here, even they give you graduate assistantship, you pay a hell a lot of money to be here, and if after you paid so much money you are treated like this is, it is just...

In fact, I was thinking, I was wondering if I should speak with Lily and Jeff about this because I have been feeling hurt about this. After I spoke to the OMBUDS person I was a little relaxed because I thought it was done, but the fact of the matter is that today, nine month on the road, I feel let down. I know a lot of students who are here just because of a program, who really don't have a sense of belonging with RIT and that is sad because you go to a school, you graduate from the school, you become an alumni, you are supposed to feel that sense with the school where you graduated from (103). For example, the schools that I graduated back in India, if I am in a position that I could help them tomorrow I definitely will, but if I am in a position to help RIT, I won't. I just won't. I just don't have that sense of belonging. I can only think on few people I want definitely work with them, keep in touch with them, but RIT as such, no no.

Thanks for your cooperation...

Interview B**Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT**

I think that before coming down here my experience was not that good because I tried to contact them maybe once everyday. I tried to e-mail them up but I didn't get any reply from them, but then I went through one of the agencies, which is back home in India and I said, "can you give me the e-mail list of all of the Indian students who are in RIT" (4), and I am from India, and they forwarded me that list and from there I tried to contact everybody (3). But frankly speaking before coming down here I used to call them but...

When you talk about "them", who is "them"?

Them...like... I don't know, at that time I didn't know who I was calling. I just had one or two numbers, I used to call them up and believe me, calling from India is like two dollars a minute (6), so they used to keeping me waiting for fifteen minutes, and at that time I go so frustrated I just hang up. In the beginning it was very scary kind of things because it was my first experience, because I am very close with my parents and they were also like, hum... I am sending my child away ...so they were also very cautious about that, what happened? Is that school good or not? So they wanted to check, so when those things happen they were very scared to send me over here (8). Later on, I checked the website and I tried to contact some people, I think I contacted with Lilly and you know...basically that is how I came over here (10). Once I came over here, believe me I love to interact to people, socializing with people, so when I came over here I met Lilly, I met Jeff, I met the PALS and after that I don't think I had any problem. I had some problems like...I had some problems maybe because I came here for the first time, outside of India, but I don't think I faced any problem...like what new students face. One such experience I had, it was that I had to stay in a hotel outside, Marriott, so we had to come over here every morning at 8:00am because there was only one shuttle coming from there, then we had to go late night like at 8:00pm. That was like a kind of scary because they were not able to help us for the accommodations, so basically that was the only hard time (13). But we had fun when we came, we used to have pizza parties and dance parties everyday, so that was fun, so when you were dancing you tried to forget the bad things that were happening.

How do you describe the transportation on-campus and off-campus?

RIT should provide more often the shuttle off-campus maybe during the weekdays, too (15). It runs from Thursday to Sunday. Maybe sometimes it happens that people who don't have a car, they need to go to the Mall and buy some emergency stuff, so they are helpless to do anything. It is been just a couple of months over here so they don't know any of the driving rules, they don't know anything, so I think RIT should provide more shuttle services to the Mall.

I think at times there is a need of some kind of arrangements of food because these young people tend to stay up late at night, so at times they just want to go out, so maybe if they don't offer the shuttle service, at least they can offer food services on-campus, so people can go, you know, to the eating joints and have something to eat and all that kind of things (19).

What would be your ideal schedule for the buses?

See, it is not time better for me or better for anybody, they should have a general timing like maybe from 5:00pm to 10:00pm because some people do have classes on weekdays during the evenings but some people don't, and in case that they want to go, they have to look for a friend of theirs because they might be having a car or they are helpless. They just procrastinate and they say ok we go on Thursdays. I think during my early stay I didn't know anything about here. Every time I used to go to Wegmans or Wal-Mart and I used to pick up just the basic stuff and come back. And when I used to come back, oh my God! I forgot this, I forgot that, so what I am trying to say is that if we know that we have constant transportation service going on, especially the international students, when they come over here they need time to adjust, right, because most of the people come over here, out of their house, for the first time and they are pretty scared, and they say, "I don't know what is the culture like". So basically they need time to adjust to the American culture, to this atmosphere, get along with the studies, groceries and all that stuff. So I think that basically if people have some basic transportation, that could be a good relief.

Most of the cafeterias, like the RITZ, are open until seven. I know according to here they eat by 6:00pm and 7:00pm and by 9:00pm they are in the half of their way back, but in some countries, specially where I come from, India, we used to have dinner like 9:00pm or 10:00pm, so we are not accustomed to have dinner at 7:00pm, even if you have a dinner by 7:00pm in the evening, you are hungry by 9:00pm (24). So we need something to eat. And at the beginning, especially for the students who stay in the dorms all of them got credit in the Grace Watson, or any other dining, but for other people they don't have any stuff to cook because they are more worried to find a place to live, they are new in that place, so it would be better if they can come out with some fast food chains (25). I think right now they are building something, in the Riverknoll area, so now it would be ok, but for us who came nine month ago, we were surviving with chips, Coke and that was it. And when we came and we saw that a dish at least was five dollars, we said, "whoa, that is a lot of money" so you don't think it is right, specially for us a dollar is equal to fifty Indian rupees, so everybody used to say...whoa two hundred and fifty Indian rupees, that is a lot of money. I will say if they have shuttle services, some fast food services, the orientation would be perfect. I didn't have any problem like when we came, PALS were very friendly with us, like the very second day of orientation; me myself was very quite popular among the PALS. So basically the orientation was good.

Tell me your experience with the accommodations.

As I told you, I was made to stay in a hotel for two weeks, that was the scary part because what they told was they couldn't find accommodations, but that they would try to find accommodations as soon as possible (29). But it took them two and a half weeks, and it was me who came up to them and say, "ok, I found a roommate, so can you give me a room to live?" and basically what I want to say is that when I was in India they asked me to send the two hundred dollars for deposit, so I sent them a letter saying that I already sent the two hundred dollars and that I needed an apartment in Riverknoll, but when I came I was been told that they couldn't find my letter, so I had to go through everything again, so I had to wait another three weeks, and it was fine with me because I can understand, but look at this way: my parents were in such worry

for me because I haven't gotten accommodation yet, I am in a hotel. What would they think? Because I got all my stuff with me, my clothes, I can't unpack yet. So I think if they can manage accommodations to every student before they land on here that would be fine.

Something regarding the arrival of the students, I think they should arrange a pick up from the airport to RIT (36). You know there are some universities that provide some kind of shuttle from the airport to the university (37). According to RIT, they do provide shuttles a day or two days before the orientation, but not everybody can come the day before the orientation. So I think they should extend this service three or four days because some people prefer to come early and see what is the atmosphere like, maybe go over there, relax, be comfortable, and then they can start with the orientation and all that, but I think there is a need that they should start supplying shuttle services for a week or maybe three or four days before the orientation for the students who wants to come here can be very comfortable and be like treated well, they get to know the people, they get to know the campus and get ready to start the classes. All the orientation is for that but believe me when I came here I attended to all the orientations and believe me I had a hard time, if somebody told me do you know where is this ... I didn't know where was anything because the campus is so huge (38). Believe me it took me like a month to figure out where all the places were located. So, I know that they tried their best, like they take students all over the campus, but it is hard for the students to remember all these things, I think if they can provide accommodations before the orientation day, maybe a week before, maybe they can charge for that week, that is not a big deal, but if they can provide the accommodations that would be very helpful.

And, ok, RIT made me stay in a hotel, they were paying everything in RIT account, but the thing is that was our little prison because you don't know anybody, so we were in such a bad position because we couldn't go out because we didn't know anything about it, we were totally dependant in the shuttle kind of things, so maybe if they can arrange some accommodations near to the campus because you don't know many people, you know only one or two people, so you tend to hang around with them, so basically at night, just imagine, you are in a hotel, all alone, doing nothing, maybe watching T.V, but you don't feel like watching those T.V programs because you are not used to them, so you are like in a cell, in a prison. So basically that was the worse part, so if they can arrange accommodations before we actually land here (43).

What about the recreational area at RIT?

Believe me when I came I used to play everything. I used to play Racquetball every morning, and then I used to go to the gym. I had fun. I won't say that RIT is lacking in recreational areas, is too good. But again, it takes time before you get your ID and all that because when you come for the orientation, I think it takes you a day or something like that. So before you get your ID you have to clear all your dues, your medical insurance, and all that stuff.

I had a problem with the medical insurance. I got my certification and my medical insurance from my doctor in India but when I came over here they refused to accept it. And I was like, how can that be possible?

What did they refuse?

The health form. Do you remember the health form? So that form is supposed to be signed by the doctor. I got it signed, I had doctor's practice number, I had doctor's everything, but still I faced some problems. They said, "No, this form is not valid"

Did they tell you why?

No, they didn't tell me, they just said that it wasn't right. So they gave me another form, I faxed to India, they got it signed, they post it me and I sent it to the Student Life Center (46).

And what happened?

Then they accepted it, I don't know, it wasn't different from the first one.

Was the second one from the same doctor?

Yes, from the same doctor. It was weird.

And what did they say?

Nothing, nothing, I just showed it to them, "ok"... So, they took the date and they said. "Ok, you are all set". I don't know, it was a kind of weird, but believe me, in the beginning days, like when I came every time I used to face some problems, oh my God, there is nobody to help me, and Lilly and Jeff, they are like really nice person because whenever I used to face a problem I used to go to Lilly, and she is such a kind lady, she is a sweet person, she helped me every time and basically that was all for the orientation.

Well, I am going to talk about other situations that happened to me. This is related with the College of Business, I don't think they are really good. I told you we faced a lot of problems. We had to get adjusted to the new environment... and all that. Well, you know that American education is totally different from all other education system, right? So I talked to one of my advisers, and I asked her, ok, I don't know what are the best class to start, so maybe if you can help me out, so that adviser, she just opened the course book and she was like going through the subject, and she said, oh, you know what, maybe you can take this subject, this is going to be good for you, I think that was the last day to add and drop courses, so I said, "ok"...so I just took the course number and I registered that, and later on, like two weeks later, the Dean and three more other advisers, all four call me up and they said, "you know what, this subject you were not supposed to take it because this subject requires one of the pre-requisites, so you can't take it right now". But I said, "hello, excuse me, one of your advisers told me to take this subject, now if I drop this subject I will be losing my full-time status, so I can't help it, either you have to do something"... "ok, ok, for you is ok, but for next time make sure you don't do this kind of things". I was like it wasn't my fault, one of your advisers told me to take this subject, I took the subject, and now two weeks after the add/drop day you tell me that I was not supposed to do it, so I was like, what the heck this is not my fault, believe, I think that the advisers that we have are not good (51). Frankly speaking. Something else, the CO-OP office, the woman who was there was pretty ok, but now the person there, nah...believe me, I rather go myself, try myself, apply myself instead of going through them because whenever you go through them they help, but they

don't help you to understand what American companies expect from us because if we want a job we cannot say, ok I want this this this. The only thing that we can say is our qualifications, but we don't know what do they expect. So you have to make a subject, ok this is the company, this is what they are looking for, you have to be like this...you have to be like technical, you have to be like logical, I think these are the things that they need to tell us (57).

Do you think that is their responsibility or do you think it is yours?

Both.

Tell me more about that.

Ok, here is the thing, if I come to you and I say I am interested in this thing, in this company, I know that they are looking for such kind of person, can you tell me what kind of things do I have to do to qualify? But they don't help us to do anything. I think they should help us, ok this is company is looking for this specific qualification, so if you present yourself like this maybe you have more chance. No and regarding a CO-OP thing, personally I went to the CO-OP office like ten or twelve times to fix an appointment, and most of the times, I know that they are busy people, but someday happened that I got an appointment like in three weeks. Three weeks is a lot of time, maybe you can give me ten minutes for answering a simple question and solve my problem. Three weeks is a long time, and that three weeks I lost one company because the deadline was maybe after ten days, so I tried to apply for that and I tried to contact them but they gave a day after three weeks and I lost that company, who knows (59).

You couldn't do anything else without going to the CO-OP office?

Yes, I still apply to that company but at that time I was supposed to register in the CO-OP office because in RIT, this again is a kind of weird thing, like if you are supposed to do for a CO-OP you have to tell them at least two months in advance, but here is the thing, if supposed I register myself for a CO-OP and I don't get a CO-OP, then what. I will be not a student, because according to them I am taking a break and I am not allow to stay on-campus because I filled out a move-out notice, I can't stay on-campus and if I don't get a CO-OP I am like on the street, I can't do anything, so I think this system ...maybe, at times what happen is like... I have a friend, she went to Boston, she stops studying, in the third week of the summer quarter she got a CO-OP, she went up to the advisers and she said, look I got a CO-OP, and first they said, nothing can be done because you were supposed to register it two months in advance, so you can take a CO-OP, you are suppose to pay the fees and all that, and she literally got pissed and she said, ok here is the thing, I am going on a CO-OP, if you want to take the fees, just take them (62). So when at times, you never know when you are going to get a CO-OP, suppose like me, if today I get a CO-OP I drop my courses, I don't care. I think CO-OP is required, so at times they are so rude and they don't tend to go along with those things and it is disturbing at times (63).

What services would you recommend?

Like the copying machine, I will say that when I came over here I didn't know that we had copy machine in the library. Maybe that was my fault or something, and suppose you are staying in

Perkins or Colony, even if they know that in the library there are copy machines, they have to come all the way to the library to get something copied, I will say if they can provide some kind of basic facilities, like cafeteria which is open like in the library (67). Also, some copier machine near to the University Commons or Riverknoll so that can be helpful for the students who are staying in Riverknoll, and another one near to Perkins and Colony so they don't have to come all the way for such a small thing. I know this kind of things will help (68). I know that they are costly but if you ask about the convenience of the students, because nothing is important but the students. We have laundry and all that stuff, so basically the copier machines, fast food chains, if we can have it so we don't have to rush, because as I told you international students don't tend to buy a car the very first day that they are away. But the most important thing if we can have more sensible advisers, especially in our college, that would be great (69).

Thanks for your cooperation...

Interview C**Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT**

Oh my God you have a nice story going on. When I applied to RIT that was two years ago. I came in fall'99; I was supposed to come in fall'98. They rejected me and I knew that they were going to reject me because I didn't have a good enough portfolio. But then I thought RIT take students in fall, winter, spring and summer. So I asked them if I could come in winter and they said yes, so I ran and ran those three months. I made a new portfolio, everything. I didn't do anything for those three months but make a new portfolio, so I could apply to RIT again. When I sent my application it was Christmas time, so the offices were shut. So, I didn't get any answer at all. I had to keep calling from India because they never respond to my e-mails. So I kept calling to the admission office and she said in January (3). I had my tickets booked to come to United States for January 17th. Until the 5th of January I didn't know where I was going and in the 5th she told me, oh by the way your program take students only in fall, you cannot come in Spring, so I felt that I wasted an entire year (4). That's how it was. Because she hadn't bother to check before she told me if my program take students or not. So, my whole year got pissed. So I went to California for six months in January and I study there. I got accepted into Fall 99 and then I came here in September.

When I came here, I came in summer last year, before the fall started, just two days to see the school and I met with my department and I was asking everybody for information and stuff like that, but that wasn't very helpful.

Why?

Because everybody was like lost, that was summer and there was nobody there.

Nobody was in the office?

No, I mean like I met my professor, he looked lost. He didn't give me enough information. I didn't know what was really happening. It wasn't very too helpful (7).

So, what did you do?

Nothing. I went back home to India, and I came back in September. I saw my lab, and I asked if there was anything I needed to do, you know, registration of courses, and they said: "Don't worry, it all will be sent you by mail, and until today I'm still struggling because I don't know what I am going to do.

About the CO-OP and stuff like that, nobody knows what to do because it is just a department with twenty students. I mean they help us, but not as much as Information Technology and College of Business do.

So, after coming here in September how did you arrange transportation?

A friend helped me. That friend picked me up at the airport and I stayed with that friend (11).

Did you know that friend before?

I had a common friend who have me his e-mail. That's how I met that friend. This friend picked me up, I stayed with that friend and then I moved into this house. And then my roommate contacted me because I put my name into the RIT website: "roommate available", so she contacted me and she said: "I have a house in Riverknoll and since I have seen the campus I wanted to stay in Riverknoll because it was close up. So, my friends were the one who helped me in everything.

Did you go to the international student office?

No, because I have been in USA six months before that. So, I knew how life was here.

What do you mean by "life was here"?

I mean, I knew how the things were going on. I didn't even attend to the orientation program because the day of the orientation I had training in my department because I was teaching assistant; and I lived for six months in California as a student. I knew how things were. I already had my bank account and everything. So, I didn't need an orientation of how to live in USA and what I need it to do and stuff like that.

So what do you think, as you observe other international students, have to be changed?

I don't know. I think when international students come in they heavily rely in other international students for help like for groceries, and all that (17). I mean, there are buses that take you, but buses are not always convenient. You cannot wait until Friday or Saturday to for grocery shopping. So you run out of milk on Wednesday, what do you do? I think they are coming with a new market now. But, otherwise at that time there was nothing, right? I didn't know about the grocery store in the dorms (20). No one told me. Maybe they said that at the orientation day, but like I told you, I couldn't go for the orientation.

I don't know what they can do. Be more informative. They don't give you enough information, that's all I can say. I remember when my roommate came in; she didn't know it was going to be so cold. When you are sending out information, you need to tell them that this place is really cold. You know. She cannot dare support (withstand) cold at all. Not at all. If she had known that this place was so cold she wouldn't come here. She cannot. I am telling you, that girl feel so cold. She sleeps with three blankets, three comforters with the heat on to eighty. So, I think they should give more information about Rochester, about the place. And have more social programs to get international students together, at least the quarter they are here, so they get to know more students.

What kind of activities do you think would be good for the new international students?

Dinners, movies, BBQ.

But, I think they did that last year.

Once every quarter, but in the first quarter I think they need more than that, don't they? Do they have more? I knew just of one (24).

How did you get that information?

I don't remember, maybe someone told me.

So, how effective is e-mail for you?

I use it a lot (25).

Can that be a way to tell you?

Definitely.

What about the recreational activities?

I think there are a lot of resources, but I don't see students using them as much.

Why do you think that is?

Let's take the example. The nice and long volleyball and basketball court and stuff near to this apartment here, how many students do you see there using it? Considering it is summer and it is so nice and everyone it is free. Except when they play cricket on the weekend. Even the gym, it is a lot, and I don't know how many people really use it. At other universities, you know there are much lively. I think RIT is pretty dead. I went to Harvard recently, last 4th of July weekend. It was so lively. People there, dancing, playing the guitar in the roads and playing chess, so much fun (28). I don't think we have that at RIT, NOT AT ALL (laugh).

What about the food service on-campus?

I am a vegetarian, and when I go to the RITZ there are just two or three things that I can eat. So I don't go there at all, and plus, it is very expensive. So, that's it. There are no choices for vegetarians. Even if you spend money, I still don't get enough food (32). There is pizza and maybe one veggie wrap or something. That's about it. So, I think they can offer more vegetarian stuff, that's the way is in my country. We eat more vegetarian food.

What about fast food, do you like it?

I don't have a problem with fast food, but I need at least one proper meal.

For example?

Something like we usually eat, rice and chappati; rice and tortillas and vegetables, maybe dahl or something (33).

Would you willing to pay a little more if you get the things here?

Honestly, when I came here, for the first time I was converting rupies onto dollars and it was very expensive (34). I would do anything to save money. I would rather go to Wegmans and buy the food there, than buy it here that is more expensive unless, of course, I don't have another choice, if I can't or something. But I think that is the main concern as an international student. That everything is really expensive. I remember when I was in California; I did a lot of stuff to save money. When I came to RIT I was a little bit used to the currency and stuff like that. Now that I have a car, because of my CO-OP job, I will definitely go to Wegmans if it was cheaper as opposed to buying in on-campus, if it was more expensive (36).

What is your opinion about the advising process in your college? What about the registration process?

See, my department is really really small, as I told you, it is only twenty students, and it is very very family kind of things. It is a private lab; nobody can use it, except us (37). It is really nice. We have couches, we can sleep there, and we can leave everything we want. It is very safe, and we have our own computer and stuff (39). But I think it is a lot more that be can done as far as advising it is concerned. Most of the other departments or colleges have assigned advisers to you, who you can do and all. In mine, we don't have an official adviser. There are two professors who run the department, we can go to them and talk to them anytime (40). But there is nothing official or structured about it, and I think I would prefer more advising than I keep getting. But here, I have to go and keep asking them. They are really nice about it. They are very nice, it is very comfortable, and I don't have to take an appointment or anything. They are just roaming around the laboratory and I can just talk to them and speak to them or something. It is very comfortable and convenient. It is not very structured.

What services would you like to see maybe in the future, for the future international students?

Promptly reply from the admission office, I think. I used to wait for e-mail and after a while I stopped waiting for her e-mail and just called her up every time I had a question. Obviously, when you are in a different country, you are waiting to find out what is happening, so I just kept calling her up, and speak to her. Probably have international students sitting in the office and answer a few questions, so that you know (48).

There are students, like Indians are accepted in the program, maybe if you send out, if you volunteers, who are like, ok, I am an Indian and I am ready to answer from other Indian student questions. They keep asking. It is going to be complex for me. I was really lucky. I have a friend. I asked that friend all the questions I wanted to ask. He was a student at RIT earlier. He answered all my questions (49). I don't know how many other people have friends in RIT, you know. Because I know my roommate, they knew this other guy. So he answered all their questions. But other students don't really know anybody. So it is helpful if there is like a

committee that is developed by volunteers or anybody. Like they have PAL'S, like ok say, these are volunteers, if you have any question, ask them or feel free to see them or something like that, you know (50). So your questions and stuff you can ask them.

How did you get the contract for your apartment?

See I had been assigned by RIT a house in Colony Manor, which they just assigned me because I filled out the forms and stuff and so they gave me a house in Colony Manor.

Did you send the money with that form?

No, I didn't send the money. You know how they send the package. You know with your admission forms, the form of acceptance, and the form for the housing, which they didn't send me (52). In the letter they said I should have the form. So I got back in touch with the admissions office, and I told them I didn't have the housing form (53). So they sent me another set. I sent that in. They gave me Colony Manor as a house, and I wanted Riverknoll. Since I knew my friend, and since I had come here in summer and looked at the housing, they told me that they had put their website (Residence Life website), where I could advertise for roommates available and stuff like that.

Thanks for your cooperation

Interview D**Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT**

Actually I came for my master's in Business Administration and then I took a transfer to Information Technology (2). I started in the MBA classes for a week or ten days and one thing, which I noticed was that the examples that the professors used to give, were basically descriptive within the Rochester area to three major companies, Kodak, Xerox and Bausch & Lomb. So when I came for my MBA that wasn't what I expected. I would expect my instructor to give me wider viewpoint of not only the USA but the whole economy of the world (3). Maybe it was too early to pass a judgment, but I was a kind of disillusioned. So, I took a transfer to information technology and hopefully after sometime I can do my MBA, but I am sure it is not going to be in this institution.

So when you made the decision to come here, how was the treatment? Did they give you the information?

Yeah, they were pretty smooth (5). I had a problem and it was related to my visa. I got an I-20 not for this school.

Tell me more about that.

I kept the other I-20. I had another I-20 not from this place. And then I wanted to switch over, so I wrote a lot of e-mails to one of the person in charge in the international student office, and I am very satisfy with the way they reply because it was very prompt and informative.

Tell me how the arrangements were for housing.

Ah, I had an advantage because I had a friend who has done his major in printing from RIT. He still has some friends in RIT so instead of going through the process of asking the college to help me, I asked his friend to help me, so he arranged an apartment roommate for me.

What is your opinion about the food service on-campus?

I cook my own food most of the times, so it is good enough.

Where do you get the food?

I buy it from Wegmans

Is that the only place?

Very rarely I go to India market, but what I need it is available in Wegmans. I wish that there were a place nearby where I could go because to go to Wegmans I have to catch a bus or ask for a ride, you know (12).

Tell me more about the transportation.

Initially I used to live in Racquet club, so I used to catch a bus to and from college, now I am in Riverknoll. One of the reasons why I moved to Riverknoll was that during evenings the bus service is not very frequent, so I think after 6:pm it's like after every hour. So if you miss one bus you need to wait for another hour, and during the final week when the lab is open until 12 or 1 the last bus will leave at 11:15pm. I could call campus safety and ask them to drop me but you know if it is something that I feel RIT should provide a bus at night. Riverknoll is very convenient so I can walk down (16). I don't need to catch any more buses.

Tell me more about the shuttle off-campus.

I have a friend who just left the last week, so I never really had to make use of the shuttle. I took it two or three times to go to Wegmans. But I think the service should be more frequent (18).

How frequent do you think it should be?

Should be three or four times per week. I have roommates who go to Wegmans so I just give them the list and I get my stuff.

Do they go by bus or by car?

They go by bus.

Tell me about the recreational area.

Uh...it is so hectic the quarter system that I haven't got much time to explore into these things; it's too hectic. I think we should change it to semester system. Ten weeks are gone like this, before you realize and you keep running from one place to another. And the three months you got to do so many things: apartments, to get your I-20 signed, and social security and this and that...oh my God!! Terrible (23).

What kind of activities should be programmed with international students?

I think it is a game related with the quarter system. Even if they have a program for international student for the first three or four months, there is so much works that should be done, unless obviously we have people to help us out.

What do you mean by "people to help us out"?

I think some universities what they have when you come in and you are an international student, they assign you to someone who have already been there in the school for sometime (26). So, that guy become someone who you can talk to, it is a kind of...become responsible for you basically. Not accountable, but responsible. If you have any problem, or question you can approach this student directly rather than going through the office of international students,

where they are handling so many students, difficult to perhaps to keep personal attention. So, maybe if I was attached to a specific student for quite some time maybe she could help me.

Tell me another service that should be provided in the future.

We do need a convenient store where you can buy basic stuff like bread, eggs or butter. So in case you need it. Otherwise you need to go off-campus to do that.

In terms of orientation, after being here for six months I would like to help new international students who come in. I can do it anyway, but I was more formal if that this person could approach me anytime regarding any question, problem they have. Create a chain approach.

When you talked about the convenient store what do you think about the price? Probably the prices here could be more expensive.

I think RIT can play a role in that. It can give it under contract. But this is something RIT has to do to help students. RIT is a very expensive school. We pay quite a lot per one quarter.

What about the advisers in your department?

It is not just my opinion, but from the most of the students in Information Technology, RIT have increased the fees for more than 30% of the fees, but if I go and ask for scholarship I get the scholarship for 30%, as long I maintain the GPA in 3.0 or above. That happens to every person who is taking MS and IT. So they are overcharging and then they reduce it by 30% to make the student feel that they are getting scholarship. So that is a kind of funny because suppose that you have a 4.0 GPA, you get 30% scholarship, and with 3.0 you still have 30% of scholarship. It is just increase and decrease.

What is your opinion about the advising process?

He is nice, but I prefer to rely on my network friends to find out my classes, because if I go to my adviser he is going to help me to choose the courses but he is not going to tell me whether this instructor is good and this is not. I would rather prefer rely on my friends (42).

Have you heard of something from your friends that should be provided?

Cheaper rent. They feel that living off-campus is much much cheaper than living on-campus and again giving the amount that RIT charges it could decrease it instead of increased every year. But if you live off-campus you need a car. That's why rather stay on-campus and pay more because for an international student is not that easy to buy a car. It is very expensive, unless I go in a CO-OP I can't think on it, and I don't want to ask my parents for money (48).

Related to facilities to communicate with our family in our countries. RIT recommends AT&T and that's the official telephone company. But what we international students do, most of us have subscribed to UNITEL. That's a 1-800 number and rather than using AT&T, which has been proven that is more expensive.

So RIT could deal with AT&T to cutting down the rates. There are other phone companies, which are charging much lesser rates. So, it is all negotiation (52). Otherwise, UNITEL is there.

Thanks for your cooperation...

Interview E

Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT

The first day I came to RIT, and I went to my department the first thing that shocked me was that computer engineering was just totally hardware, when I thought that it was hardware plus software. So that thing wasn't very clear to me. Now is ok, but at that time I was pretty depressed. The second thing was that I saw so many Americans and no Indians that day (3). I was totally depressed. Now it is ok. Other things like the process was very smooth, especially my I-20.

Tell me more about when you applied to RIT, when you got the admission application.

I applied on line. I took the e-mail address, and I wrote to the director of the computer department. I asked the admissions department for the application form, and they sent all: the confirmation letter that I had to sign and everything. That was one week late because I think they sent it through ship (6); and then the due date had gone, and I called to RIT to the Dean, and he said: "no problem, you can send it". They told me in what stage I was, and that I should get an apartment on this day, and this and this.

After I came here I started looking for a roommate. I didn't go to the orientation but we were walking on campus and seeing the different buildings, and I talked to the Dean and my professors. I didn't know that we had to register for classes. I was confused. I thought: "how am I going to sit in the classes, I don't have the schedule or anything", and my roommate said: "yes you have to register for classes" (13). So again I talked to the Dean, and he said: "ok, take the core courses in the first quarter; take three or four at the time and you will see how is everything" (14).

How did you manage the accommodations?

From there itself they had told me that I had to fill out the application form with the first, second and third choice. Also I needed a roommate not smoking. So after that they gave me an apartment in Colony Manor, and they said: "in this particular day you have to come, pay the fees, the rent, and we will give you the key". So by 9:00am we got the apartment. But just now all my roommates have finished all their courses, so I moved to Riverknoll because it is very close to the college.

What is your opinion about the food service on-campus?

When I was staying in Colony Manor, we four decided to cook everyday, one person at the time but that didn't work because one was American, one from Switzerland, one from south India, and me from the north of India.

So we ended preparing four breakfast, four lunches and four dinners. But it wasn't a problem. Towards the end of the quarter I used to eat in RITZ because it takes 20 minutes to go to Colony, have lunch and again come back (19).

Is there anything you think should be changed? If so, what?

I think yes because see our diet is completely different. We cannot survive just with bread, hotdogs. We cannot have bread all the time, and the other things are baked. They can prepare something a little bit towards India side like Chinese food, something different (22). We need those chappati, wheat, real cooked vegetables and some rice. I mean eating wraps, burgers is not good. It is not good. Not everyday (23).

What is your opinion about the cafeteria schedules?

It was ok, that never used to bother me because RITZ was open until 7:00pm, and by 9:00pm our classes used to finish, and we used to take the bus, go home and cook. Lunch was the major problem.

So, what time do you usually eat your dinner?

Back in India we used to have our dinner by 10:pm. So at the time I was living in Colony. Sometimes when I had some food that I cooked before, I just ate it.

How do you describe the transportation on-campus?

Transportation was good, but you know during the day, the buses were every twenty minutes but during the evenings, they were every one-hour (30). So that was really bad. Suppose for example, the bus used to come at 6:40pm, 7:40pm so if your class is getting over at 7:00pm for forty minutes you have to wait. So that is the main thing. They could have buses every twenty minutes in the evenings, too.

What about the buses off-campus?

The schedule is fine. I used to go on Saturday to Wegmans but two of my roommates had cars, so after fall quarter I used to go with them (33). We used to have some common goods like juice; otherwise we used to have different groceries. Like I am a vegetarian, so I can't have chicken. Now, in this house (in Riverknoll) everything is divided by three.

How do you describe the recreational area at RIT?

Other than gym, that area has very less participation. For the past three quarters we used to go Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays to play badminton, basketball. We had cricket matches, so that was good. The tracks are good.

What about activities for international students?

I have never been in those activities. I have never gone out of the Indian group, personally (40).

Why?

I think I feel more comfortable with Indians. If you see in RIT, we all have different groups, and I have never seen them mixed. I think if you have like cultural activities and you invite us, I think there we can mix together. For example, we celebrated on-campus one of our festivals, and many Americans and other cultures came in.

Can you think of another service that should be created for the future international students?

I think they should provide more information about the courses that they have, like I keep getting so many e-mails from students back in India, and they say: "I don't know about computer science program, they had told us do this pre-requisite". So they should give more details, more descriptions about all of the courses.

Are those students' graduates or undergraduates?

Graduates (49). I have seen the website, and they don't give you information in depth (50). For example, they don't tell you if you don't have this background you need to take these courses (51).

What is your opinion about the advising process in your college?

I think they are very helpful. I think my adviser...you said anything and they say, "Yeah, it's ok", or they say, "You do whatever you want". They won't sit with you and talk to you (53).

What about the registration process?

That's really bad (54). You know computer-engineering students, if you want to take some information technology course, they will give us the last chance. They say: "first information technology people, then come science people, then other people, then come engineering people". They should have some quota fixed. You have to go to the information technology department and, tell them to register.

So what is the part you think should be changed?

They should have specific numbers. They can say: "ok, these numbers of students can come from computer science". I mean, we can join, that is what information technology people say, but when we go always the classes are full.

Thanks for your cooperation...

Interview F

Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT

The correspondence with RIT was exceptionally good but the problem was like I already finished my masters, and still they put me into the BRIDGE (1). So I asked them that my BRIDGE should be wave off. I came here and took some process, took some time. I could get it wave off. In case of other students, they are saying that that has been a problem for them. I know a couple of students, particularly one student, whose has done her master's in economics in a big school in London, and still she had to do a corporate BRIDGE program here.

What do you think would be the reason for that?

Just to increase the length that you are going to be here, and the number of courses that you have to take (6). But those courses are not important at all for those people. They already covered that stuff. That is the first thing, and the second thing was that I found that the initial material they send you with the application, the one that you have to send back for registration and stuff, the material they sent you after that it is a photocopy and that is really nasty.

What papers do you mean?

First of all, they send everyone the papers, the brochure of college of business where everything is listed and all of that but the second time they send you a photocopy of that...ok. I talked to my roommate; even he received a photocopy. I thought that was cheap. The rest after coming here was a kind of ok. The first night I came in and I was supposed to meet someone from the housing department inside of building, my taxi left me out there and no one showed up, and it was snowing... I was like...oh God; I didn't even have a key to my apartment (14), so I dragged my entire luggage throughout the campus (15). I couldn't find the building for university commons because at that time that building was new and nobody knew about it, and it was at the end of the campus (16). That was tough. But roommates were nice, apartment nice.

So, tell me more about the admissions department.

Other than that communication was good. I knew which apartment I was supposed to go, I just needed it to collect the key.

At what time did you come?

I came pretty late, it was like 1:00pm or something but I called the office and they said, "we do have a person for this, and he will meet you outside building #3, in university commons, so I reached there. I think I would have appreciated if someone would have come and pick me up. But it was ok. It was a pretty odd time. So, I understand that nobody could help.

How do you describe the food service on-campus?

I am not enrolled into any food service because we have a kitchen in our house so we cook constantly for ourselves (24). But one thing is certain, that we could have better food at RIT.

Like...

Getting some fast food chains, like even things like Pizza Hut...I went to one of the campus in another university and even they have Pizza Hut, Taco Bell inside the campus. Because you have to have a car if you want to go out and have something to eat (29). The only option that you have is RIT cafeteria. The food is ok. But is not very good (31).

What would you change there?

First of all, they could have more variety, probably the students making the food I don't know, most of them involved into RITZ and the cafeteria upstairs, for the first quarter that they are here. So half of their time gets into learning how to make that stuff, so by the time they become good at it, they leave that job. So, you usually end up not having good food.

What do you mean by "more variety"?

They have two or three kinds of food, but I think the solution would be to get two or three fast food chains, in the campus (38).

And, how do you manage cooking in your house?

Well, I am a vegetarian, so I found very difficult to get vegetarian stuff in the cafeteria, so I usually cook. I get my stuff from the Mall or Wegmans and cook my own food.

How do you describe the transportation on-campus and off-campus?

The first five months was pretty bad because we had bus service which take you out off-campus only in the weekends, so if you want to go out on the weekdays because sometimes you don't have some stuff because you run out of it, you cannot wait for the weekend, you know... that was bad. I eventually bought a car, so after that it has been fine.

What about on-campus buses?

I usually walk because of the waiting time for the buses are too much and you have to sort of regularize your schedule according to the buses.

So what would you change?

Probably increase the frequency, but I am not really sure because I wasn't so far so I really didn't care about the buses. Off-campus buses: they should have at least three or four buses in the evening during the week.

And, what places would you recommend (as destinations)?

Usually to Wegmans and Mall.

How do you describe the recreational area at RIT?

Hum... it is a kind of ok. I think they should create activities "to get together" and functions going on inside the campus.

Functions?

I mean some groups doing some activity, something should be happening. Usually people are not involved in the activities on-campus, which is very important, and definitely help you to interact on your own perspective and also to build a strong feeling of loyalty towards the college.

Here the people usually come down to college, attend the classes, and go as soon as they can (63). It should be some incentive to stay, to get together. Something...we have Photography College, probably have a group of dramatist. They should be doing something, and every one should be invited.

What is your opinion about the advising process in your college?

That is one aspect on RIT that is totally pathetic. There is so much of bureaucracy in that. If you want to take certain classes they are clashing most of the times. They are always clashing. For example, next quarter I cannot take any of the classes because three classes that I wanted to take are in the same day so I can take just one. The rest of the classes are not been offered. Even in this quarter, three classes that I wanted to take were being offered on one day, Tuesday evenings. That's it.

We asked the people down at the college to change this. We walked to the professor and she said that wasn't a problem with her, that she could schedule it for Thursdays or Fridays whenever she was free, in the summer usually, but somehow those people couldn't arrange it (73). The administration involved in that is really bad, and the second thing is that they are called counseling (75).

I wonder if people who are sitting at the counseling desk actually know anything about the subject. They would make comments like "ok, this is a good course, I know that you want to take finance courses but this course of marketing is also good, why don't you take that?" I mean, I am a financial student, why would I want to take a marketing course, if that decreases one course that I can take in finance and further? I think a good preparation for the finance studies would be to have more core courses than they have now (77). Something else, we are required to take eight electives, and eight electives of some other concentration but we cannot take other eight electives out of the finance field, so some of the very important finance courses are left out. How would I wanted to take those courses but I can't, and that is something I don't like! They are not ready to make me compromise on anything, where I should be allowed to design my whole courses structure. It is a professional course. Everyone has that kind of exposure to the

market and exposure to the academics that can choose and pick his own subjects. Here the things are very rigid, it is not flexible at all (82). I think that needs work.

What is your perception about the program?

I think a little but more interaction with the market would help a lot. Getting speakers from the corporate world, taking the students out to the corporate world and sharing things around them, how things are actually working. That could have helped. I think a little more projects inclined towards actual uses of what is being taught in the corporate world. Those projects would have been good. It is probably because we have such a short division.

What were your expectations before coming to RIT?

I was expecting a little more in finance field particularly, but I heard that this institute is very focused in technology, and from the brochure I had an idea that I could involve technology in the financial field as well, and it will be a very technical course. But I am really disappointed because the classes that I am taking since last year are very basic. I mean, you can't go beyond this MBA. After MBA you could probably only do Ph.D, but that is something different of what you need in the corporate world. But in finance MBA, you should know quite a lot of stuff that are not being taught here. They don't go deep into the subject (88). I don't know what is the reason behind this, but they should do it.

There are classes like international finance, securities investments, they should go deeper into these subjects, they should teach the entire technical context. I know that technical aspects of finance do not very well work in the market, and what ultimately counts is your analysis on the market place. But the thing what exactly encourages the corporate, what really creates an interest of them in your College of Business, is if you have done very technical in finance and if you have written down the projects.

These are all the projects that I have done. They are sort of impressive by that. If you tell them, well "I did a company analysis", and they ask you "what did you do in the company analysis?" and you say: "ok, I read the newspaper, I checked the Internet for the information, and I did that". They are not really interested in that. That is groundwork. You know. If they ask you, "What did you do after that", and you respond: "I didn't do anything after that" "Why?" "Because they don't teach us that", "did you follow any particular model?" "No I didn't because our professor said those model don't work".

What other service would you recommend to RIT?

I think for international students is very important to have associations, which get the international students and teach them the culture, the working environment. That is not actually very well followed to. We have associations like ASMA but I haven't seen them doing anything other than eating pizza. I would join all those organizations, but I went to a couple of meeting, and I was sort of disappointed by that.

What do they do there?

Most of the meetings is “ok, we have to do this arrangement: some corporate speaker for sometime”. They have meetings every week. Each speaker that they call cost something like a 1000 pizzas that they heat every week, and that is hilarious (ridiculous)

If you are in an association or something you give two hours every week. Those two hours should be productive. You should see the results every month. I never felt that these associations are doing anything. I think that the concept was very good, but it is not working. That would help international students a lot, at least help them to socialize, to open up.

I think there is something else very important; the alumni network. Our alumni network is really pathetic. The network is not really maintained (100). Those people could really help. Those are the people who could really introduce you into the company where they are. But here, I don't think anything of this has been formal. Because I know Citibank and M&T had taken people from College of Business. So, why are they not coming here anymore? Why are they not contacting people from RIT, people who already were in those banks? Nobody is even trying to find out why our companies are pulling out of RIT, while there should be more companies coming for RIT. Most of the big companies are pulling out: Johnson & Johnson recruit very less people from RIT now. Kodak pulled back. Citibank got headquarters in Rochester; they pulled back. HSBC had its headquarter in Buffalo, they don't recruit from here. M&T banks got headquarters around this area somewhere; now they don't recruit from RIT. Why none of those companies are impressed with our MBA? Something is missing.

It is probably not the quality of the students because even if it is like that, then the selection procedure is wrong. It is probably something that the corporate wants them to do, but they are not doing. I think that is what the job of the CO-OP office or the recruitment here, have to find out.

Thanks for your cooperation...

Interview G

Tell me your experience of the first 9 months at RIT.

It was inconvenient. When I first got here, I was lucky because I met a student from Taiwan. I didn't know anywhere to go and I didn't know anyone to help me in the school.

You know, I should be here in 1998, but I asked the school to pursue, how to say that? My attendance in 1999? So, before coming here in 1999, I made phone calls to admission's office several times, and I asked them some questions about housing, and they replied to me: "ok, you just pay about 200 dollars and you will have a place to live". So, I believe what they said. I thought that I didn't need to apply for an apartment and I didn't (sent the notice with the admission form). I thought I got a place to live because I made several phone calls to reconfirm, and they gave me the same answer. But, when I came here, ja, ja, I was wrong because I had no place to live. I think that the worse thing that RIT doesn't do is not to give the correct answer, the correct information that you need. For example, no one helped me to find a place to live, but I have heard that some schools in United States help new international students by sending someone at the airport. They will drop you at the bank, so you can open an account or just simply to find a house to live.

You know, during the first or second week, when I came here, I went to the Residence Life Hall and I asked them if they could find at least a temporary place that we could stay. They said: "if you are not going to stay in the dorms or apartment in the campus then, we cannot do that for you". So, we had to find out apartment for ourselves. It was very inconvenient.

Tell me more about when you applied to RIT, when you got the information.

Hum. It was very funny. I thought that they had issued the I-20 for me very soon, so when I got the I-20, oh no, it's not the I-20, it's a letter to tell me that I was accepted by the school. But, when I requested them the I-20, they said: "we still need other documents". So, my question is why they didn't ask me for all the documents at once (10). At that time they told me: "you still have to give me this, this, this", and the second time they told me "you still have to give me this, this, this". I just wondered why they couldn't tell me just at one time, not several times, all the papers that they need.

Another example, and this one was very ridiculous. I sent them the documents from bank, because they required that. Then, one month later, they sent it back, so I thought: "ok, maybe they are done with these papers and they sent them back". But still at time I didn't receive the I-20, so I made a phone call to school again and I asked them (13), what happened? Why I haven't received my I-20, and they told me: "oh, because we haven't received your documents from the bank". "It's ridiculous", I said. "I had already sent to you those papers and you sent them back to me", and they said: "I'm sorry, we cannot issue the I-20 unless you send them to us again". It was so ridiculous. I couldn't believe it. So, I did it again by DHL, and then I received the I-20, you know (16).

At the beginning, when you thought to apply to RIT, how did you get the information to apply to RIT?

I went to the library in my college, and there is a small room with the information about studying abroad. I found the information there, and I sent the application form and they gave me the information that I needed, so I thought, ok, I will try, and two or three months later, they said that I was accepted, ok.

You mentioned that they told you something one day and then after that, you needed something else, something different. You didn't receive instructions for applying to RIT?

Ok, I did it. I sent them to the admission's office. Then, I don't know why, they told me that they required another document, and I didn't know why. So, and I wanted to know if there was any Taiwanese student association at RIT that could help me. But they didn't know if there was any association like that, and they couldn't tell me: "ok, we have the student association that you want" (20). I was lucky in that situation because the actual president of the Taiwanese student association in 1998 went to the international student office by herself, and she checked out the list of the new students by herself. So she found out a list of new students from Taiwan, so she sent me that later. I knew through her that there was a Taiwanese student association at RIT. But the new president of the Taiwanese student association in 1999 didn't do the same job. However, I got a letter of the old president, so I made a phone call to her, and she told me who was the new president of the Taiwanese student association, so I could contact with him. But, think about it, if those new students, who didn't know there was a student association like this, who are they going get contact with (24)?

What is your opinion about the food service on-campus?

Ok. I am very conservative. I only eat the food that I like. I was conservative to try new food, so every time I used to come to the cafeteria, I only used to go to the salad area, and also the central area. But, I won't go around the other areas. I won't try.

Why not?

I was conservative, I don't know.

Do you think there is another reason other than that one?

I don't like the food here.

Why not? What do you think should be done?

Hum.. Sometimes they have Chinese food, but it doesn't taste like Chinese food (30). Usually the food in the cafeteria is too salty and too dry (31).

Has that idea changed now that you have been here several months or not? What is your idea now?

Hum. No, it hasn't changed. If it changes, it would be very good. Hum, I don't know, I'm not used to eat on-campus; I like to cook by myself.

Do you think that the quality of the food is because of lack of knowledge of that specific food?

Hum, Hum (positive reply). Yes, that's true. I don't know, ok, I never had hamburgers at school. I ate downstairs once, and I ordered a sandwich, but they asked me a lot of things, for example, what kind of topping you need, and they asked me in detail, and that bothers me (34). I don't like it because I don't know the name of the food (35).

Like what? Tell me one example.

Hum, I don't know how to describe it, for example, I ordered a egg salad and they asked do you need a pickle or do you need...what is that? Potato chips, something like that. They have a lot of choices, but I don't know, it's just...it's disturb me.

Why?

Because I don't know some of the terms and some of the ingredients, I think they should write them down in somewhere and give you directions how to do it (41).

Would you prefer to prepare the salad by yourself or do you prefer to let someone else do it for you?

Ok. If it is a salad I would prefer to do it by myself, but for other food, I don't know.

How do you describe the transportation here, on-campus and off-campus?

Transportation?

You know, the shuttle on-campus and off-campus.

Yeah, I know, I have never take the shuttle on-campus.

Why not?

I live off-campus. I usually take bus #24 to go to school and go home, and it stops in the place, then I just get off, before the place where I want to go.

What about the recreational area at RIT?

I like the gym, I like all the equipment that they have, swimming pool, skates, etc.

What kind of sports do you do?

I tried the gym once.

Do you still go there?

No

What is the reason?

I don't have time, but actually I enjoyed the equipment that they have. I'm a graduate student, and I don't have a lot of time. But my friends usually go to the gym every Friday to play basketball.

Tell me about the registration process.

Ok, Hum. I was lucky again because my friend showed me where the registration office was, where my department was because I didn't know where they were (48). If there's no one to show you, you don't know where they are, ok. Then I knew where the place to register was, but when I got here I had blocked all my courses (50).

Why blocked?

Because they said I had a restriction on the system, so I cannot take courses.

Why not?

They said that I had to take the Michigan test first (51). That was the problem. So I went to the Graduate Assistant, and she registered for me.

What happened after that?

I only could take 8 credits. They said that I had to take courses at ELC to complete the rest of the credits. They said I had to do it, but I didn't.

I only took 3 hour-courses in ELC, and I went to the International Student Office and they told me that I was a part-time student, but being an international student you cannot be a part-time student here at RIT. So they said I had to be a full-time student, and that I had to take more courses at ELC. I didn't like that idea because there was an existing gap in the process. When I received the I-20 I thought that everything was fine. I thought that I could take all the courses that I wanted in my department. I didn't know that I had to take English courses here, and that wasted my time and my money (57). I didn't want to do that. So after I talked to the person in charge in the International student office, she agreed that I only could be a part-time student in my first quarter. I had to take the Michigan test by the end of the quarter.

Did you take the TOEFL exam in your country?

Yes.

What happened?

I didn't get a good score. I thought that it was ok to have less than 3 points to meet the requirements of the department. So, that was the reason I sent the application and they said nothing and they issued me the I-20. They didn't say anything about my score, so I thought that there was no problem with it (60). However, when I came they told me that I had to take the Michigan Test and I had no idea about that.

How is the access to the Internet in your country?

Oh, it is very convenient, but I never received any e-mail from RIT.

Did you try to contact someone?

No. I didn't know whom to talk with because each time I used to call admission office and each time a different person used to answer my questions. They "answered" my question and that was it. So, I didn't know exactly whom I should talk to.

Tell me more about the services that the library offers to you.

What do you mean? When I came here? Ok. I think it's fine. I think the library inter-loan is very convenient. It helps us to find the book we want (66).

But, when you came here, how was that?

No one showed me where to go in the library to take out a book or how to use the library. I didn't know how to do that.

So, how did you learn?

Hum. I went to the library and I asked there, and sometimes I asked to my friends how to borrow books. In the first two quarters I didn't borrow a lot of books from the library. When I needed a book I used to read the books there. So, it didn't function a lot for me, but now that I am writing my project, I need a lot of books, and it helps.

When did you come here?

In fall quarter.

Did you go to any of the tours that they had here in the fall quarter?

To where?

Sometimes RIT offers tours around the campus.

I didn't have any information about that, and I didn't know where to get the information like that.

How would you evaluate the orientation day?

I didn't go to the orientation day.

Why not?

I don't know why. I forgot why, but I didn't go.

Ok.

You didn't think that could help you to understand RIT?

Yes, I think so. But I don't know because before that my friend had already showed me the campus, so I thought it would be the same thing. Maybe that's why I didn't go.

Do you think that you would prefer another way to get information at RIT about other services? What would be the best way?

I think admission's office should commit with international student office in a better way, so they can send correct information to new students (75). This can be by phone, e-mail or letters before they leave their countries (77), and maybe they should edit a small booklet about everything new students should know and put it in the folder and send it to the new student.

What other service would you recommend to RIT?

I think there are a lot of international student associations at RIT, but I don't know how they function (79). I think they also have to be connected with admission office (80), so they will know how many new students will come, and as a consequence they can contact them in advance.

Why did you choose to live off-campus?

As I said I didn't have a place to live on-campus (82). They told me that there was no room for me on-campus, so I had to find a place off-campus so my friends helped me to find a place to live. Another reason, I think it is quieter than to live on-campus.

How was the process of getting adapted to a new culture?

I tried to get adapted, but it takes time (85).

Why do you think it takes time?

I don't know why, but maybe because of the inconvenience that I had the first quarter when I came here. That made me unhappy, or maybe because I didn't know anything about this new country and this new culture (88). I had some problems when I had class and I couldn't understand what American students were saying because they talked very fast (89). So maybe the language problem was another problem that delayed my adaptation time here at RIT.

Do you know that we have activities on-campus for international students?

No, I only know the activities that the Taiwanese Student Association has. I don't know about the others.

Have you received any messages from the international student office?

Oh, yes, sometimes.

How frequently?

I had received three or four messages about activities on-campus.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Interview H

Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT

I was unpleasant and surprised because I arrived a couple of days earlier than I was supposed to, so I was sent to a hotel, I understood that situation, especially since I knew there were other students in hold, waiting to be accommodated in dormitories, and let's say that wasn't a major problem. I didn't have an assigned apartment because I was supposed to go to another school.

Another school?

I knew five days before coming here because I was a Fulbright student and I chose another school, and RIT was my next choice and then it happened. But when you have to negotiate the second year because this scholarship is a full-year scholarship, and they (the Fulbright) didn't agree until five days before I was supposed to go to Maryland. I had everything, my ticket to Washington, and everything. That was crazy, and that was because RIT really accepted me that last day.

An accommodation is really important, especially when you come from abroad. So, I called before I came, and I was assured by one of the assistants in the office that there wouldn't be any problem.

Then I arrived, and there was the problem: they couldn't find the lady that gave the information about the housing. So what happened was that I had traveled for twenty-four hours for all around the world, and I ended waiting with Campus Safety while they were trying to track her, even into her house (5). Which she wasn't there, and eventually they found somebody else who put me in the NTID building, and I didn't know what was NTID because I was coming from another country (6). In the morning I woke up, and because they gave me a ride in the car, at night, I couldn't remember where Residence Life. So I went out and I saw people, and I tried to ask them except because they couldn't tell me, which was fine as long as you expect it, but when you are trying to know where you are... I was really crying at the end, the whole experience, I just wanted to find my way. Then Residence Life told me that I was supposed to leave because they needed their room. I couldn't stay there. They said that I was supposed to go to a hotel, which I did for two days. It was really terrible (11). Maybe they can find a way to accommodate you for a while, and not send you to a hotel and besides, it's expensive (13).

I had talked to somebody, and she told me that it wouldn't be a problem. So they found a place for me, and then they changed their mind for whatever reason, and I was already here and I couldn't do anything about it.

So, let's see, you came here; you knew that someone here would help you before coming here.

Yes, I was given a phone number, and I contacted with the people on Residence Life and I talked to one of the assistants, but it wasn't just her fault. She told me what to believe and she tried. So she tried to accommodate me, but eventually when I came here, in the next morning I asked

about. But somebody over her decided that they cannot give me a place to live, and then they decided to send me to a hotel. So, first NTID, second a hotel and then Radisson for two days, which was my third residence, and the fourth was when they put me in a dormitory eventually. After that, I went to the dorms, which of course was a bad idea but because they tried to advise me, and I didn't read the brochure. They tried to see what my situation was, and somebody decided that dorms were a great idea which was completely without any sense because I was a graduate student and besides having an undergraduate, hum... I'm 26 years old... I mean how old are you?

I'm 23

Well, have you tried to live with a 19 or 18 years old? Oh my God! Well, It was...they didn't do anything to help me. They knew that I was a special case because I was about to go to another school... I told you I came here at night after 24 hours, so I traveled from my capital to Vienna, from Vienna to Amsterdam, from Amsterdam to Detroit and from there to Rochester. It is far away and those flights were indirect flights.

As I told, you this woman gave me her phone number and she told me to go to Campus Safety except because Campus Safety couldn't find her, so I was waiting after 24 hours in Campus Safety place where they didn't know what to do with me.

Tell about the registration of your classes?

It was good (24). I came to College of Business and they were the most helpful people I ever met here; and also the international students office tried to help, except for... they really don't have enough coordination with the housing and other things like that because you know...there must be a way to accommodate international students in a room (27). For example, Jeff helped me with his own car. Do you know Jeff?

Yes, I know him.

He gave me a ride to a hotel, and I was so lost because I have been abroad only in Greece (29). So it was a very new experience for me, and they really scared me. After I stayed two nights in a hotel, I went each and every day at least twice to the Residence Life office, and they used to tell me: "No, wait until Sunday, or at least until Monday". I don't remember. When that day arrived, I used to be there since the morning, waiting the whole morning and they started saying: "No, I'm sorry..."; of course they wouldn't think anything because there were all these other students with mothers...etc. etc. and parents, and nobody cares that I was there for I don't know how many days. So, that was terrible, and what I did was to make a scandal. I was so mad of them. So they accommodated me, finally.

So, how did you get the apartment?

I just told them that I wanted to speak to somebody and they told me: "No, you have to wait for your turn to come". There were many people and I said: "Well, I have been for two days, and you know I am here from the morning and I don't see any help or something". And there were

like these parents, excited you know, asking questions. So I said something: "Was I supposed to come with my mother here to get some attention?" or something, so, they eventually managed to put me in Radisson for two nights, so I thought this has been my third residence.

First, I was one night in NTID, second night I was in a hotel off-campus and then in Radisson and afterwards which was great fun actually to be off-campus you know I am completely in a new country, knowing nobody around...

How do you describe the food service on-campus?

Well, once you are living in the dormitories you are supposed to eat in one of the locations (cafeteria). I think mostly Grace's but you can also go to RITZ, but it just didn't work for me. First of all, I wasn't accustomed to the food because in my country we don't put any spicy, so basically what I ate there was fruit, vegetables and sandwiches. They didn't have anything else that I could eat, which is completely different what I am used to.

What kinds of vegetables or fruits are you used to eating and how?

Well, we have them cooked, though. We will eat vegetables and stuff like that but they will be cooked. For example, we don't have that much fries but we will have baked potatoes, beans and rice. For example, you can mix the rice with some stuff like real food. I don't know how to explain you, but zucchinis or eggplants; it's like real healthy food. It doesn't take you time to prepare it. It's not that the food there was bad, but I wasn't accustomed to that, so...

How long did it take you to get accustomed to it?

I don't really like it. There was a briefly time when I liked it, and afterwards I was like sick of it because as I told you, I was eating fruits and vegetables and sandwiches each and everyday (45). I am used to having a good food, a good cooked meal. So it took me plenty of time, and even now, I am sometimes even dreaming about my home cook food (46). Now, I am in an apartment, so I can cook it, thanks God!

Are you vegetarian or not?

I can eat meat, when it is not spicy. Sometimes it is really bad. For example, French fries, somehow they are really very very oily.

How do you describe transportation at RIT?

I walk a lot, and I think I should get a car because in Rochester there is no other way (50).

How did you manage to go off-campus?

Yeah, that is terrible. I just don't understand why RIT doesn't rent something, which is in more constantly basis. Going to Wegmans takes me like 4 hours. I am always asking friends, but even when I need to go to the mall or something. I mean they pass to each and every stop in RIT

route. It is like forty to forty-five minutes in one direction; even more when you go back because it goes to every other place before it goes to South Loop. I think I have done it just four times. I'm asking friends for favors.

Who are those friends?

They are mostly international students.

And, how long they have been here?

I don't know, some of them came with me, another a year before of that. It just happened. Most of them are my classmates. That is my circle.

What about other services on-campus?

There is something else. I bought a sunglasses from Campus Connection, and they broke on the second day, and I tried to return them, but they said they don't have any return policy, and the same thing happened with the diskettes. The quality of what they are selling is bad, and since you don't have any other choice, you know what I mean (58)? I don't have a car, so I am trying to buy stuff from there, and it is not only that I also bought the thing to make holes in papers and it didn't work. Even the international calling card, the one that they have there for some reason it doesn't work to call to my country. So what happened was that I was trying to call, so either I won't make a connection or I just heard my mother, my father shouting on the other side, you know...trying to say that they cannot hear me. And afterwards I was charged, and I went there and I told them that card didn't work, etc, etc. and they said: "we don't have a policy to accept it back..." I mean...why don't they let some vendors to come to the campus, so they have a great competition?

Did you try to call customer service?

I did, and what happened was that a couple of times they returned the money, and afterwards I think they got pissed off with me because right now I can't even make a call. I mean they returned the money, I tried to call again, and the same thing happened. So, what is the point of talking with the customer service if I can never call? And also, sometimes I had emergency calls; do you know what I mean (64)? And they said: "this is the cheapest", but I am not sure that is the cheapest.

Have you tried the telephone service on-campus?

I am thinking to switch into that. I don't know a lot about it but I think AT&T or Sprint have special rates (66). So I think that is what I am going to do.

How do you describe the recreational area at RIT?

I haven't used the gym a lot, honestly.

What about other activities on-campus?

Like what? I know that the international student office has tried a lot of times, and they are very helpful, but I haven't seen anything else (68). Like Lily and Jeff, I can only say great things about them. I think they go all beyond what is required. Also, my adviser here, she was also very helpful. I don't know about other activities. Outside that, the college can improve in terms of "career related services for students", for example a college doesn't keep long-term relationship with employers; do you know what I mean (70)?

No...

For example, back home my professors were in the industry; maybe that is not the case with the rest of the professors at the Colleges of Business. But the professors here are not in the industry, so they have few connections. Also, outside that the mechanism of controlling what the professors do in the College of Business, especially of teaching, the quality of teaching. I have a couple of professors who openly say wrong things about international students...yeah...they will say...for example, a girl came from Croatia and a professor said that he visited once that country, and the bathroom was only a hole on the ground, and he was talking that on relation to her. He was asking who was from there. And she said I am from there. He said "I was a couple of years in Croatia and I saw this this this". So what are you doing with something like that, and not only that, but other things that were inappropriate. I don't think there is a clear way of communication (72).

I think that the school accepts everything for granted. Those professors are professional and sometimes they aren't. I have academic complaints as well. There is a kind of trade off between professors and students where professors don't teach very hard some of the courses where they give good grades, so students just don't care. Do you know what I mean? So what you have is a piece of paper, but you don't know enough, and I don't see any mechanism what I can say what I think. I think I am one of the barrier students here, I mean in the sense of higher standards. I think that the kind of reputation will harm the reputation in the College of Business.

We need to have enough exposure to the industry, to realize that this is the wrong concept (76). There is a girl who works in Xerox, and she agrees with me that some of the professors just don't bother to teach right, and at the same time, they are very capable of building reputation among colleagues (77). That starts from the higher administration against the Dean. It is difficult for students. What you can do is to educate international students about their rights, for example one of my professors at the College of Business said that regardless of any kind of evaluation we give him he will stay because he is ten years here. So I really think that students should be educated when they come, what their rights are, and that the school cares about them.

Sometimes, as I said, if there could be some way that the bus going to Wegmans goes directly, without going and stopping in each and everyplace, and sometimes the driver doesn't bother (80). For example, one day I was waiting in the stop in front of the SAU and because the driver thought that students never go there, which might be true, he just pass with the bus in the distance, so he couldn't see me. People from different countries have very very different everything. Like styles of cooking, just perceptions what you are supposed to do and because

sometimes you get into conflict without realizing where it comes from. So maybe if somebody can inform us about different habits. For example, I am having a Chinese roommate and I understand that her food is one of the best in the world, but sometimes when she is cooking, it smells so terrible that honestly I feel like throwing up and I understand that is not her problem.

Even with small things she is not really really wise, for example I was listening to classical music like Carreras or Placido Domingo several days ago when my roommate suddenly went to my room and said: "what's the matter with you, what is this kind of music that you keep listening to, that is so crazy". I mean she thought that was heavy music that she can even vary. So maybe if you can even prepare us for all this different expectations, different in everything because it goes well beyond, it is just accent, different dressing because is like obviously has to be (85).

Thanks for your cooperation

Interview I**Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT**

Well, I joined in spring, in March, so when I came here, I had a lot of problems, so to get all my official paper work done, you know my social security card, my bank account. I had a problem with my social security number.

So what happened with those papers? Did you call them?

Yes, I called them up, but they said, "your card has been processed, you should be receiving it". So in four weeks I didn't receive it, so finally I talked to Jeff, and he said that maybe I could send them a letter that he will sign it for me. But then they returned it back saying that they needed to see my passport in original. That was a really big problem like you know, I was new here, I didn't know anything about this place, and how should I go there? I asked many people, but I didn't get any help so then finally I decided to go there somehow, so I went there and filled it up.

How did you go there?

By bus.

And how did you find the place?

I went the information desk and I asked them what should I do, so the person was quite helpful. He looked up everything and he told me exactly where it is and also I asked the bus driver how to go to that place, and he told me, you go like this like this like this and I went there and I filled it out (5).

But the main problem was the transportation. When you come here you, you don't have anything, and if you don't know anyone out here, who has a car, it is quite difficult, and even I know some people who have car, but they are working from 8:00am to 5:00pm and that is the period when I need to go there. It becomes really difficult when you don't have a car. For example, you cannot get your bank paper done, and you don't know where anything is, that was one of the major problems I faced (7).

When I came here representatives of different banks came to the campus. What happened in your situation?

You must have come in fall. I came in spring 2000 and at that time the international student office wasn't expecting so many students, which is why they didn't come.

Tell me more about the admission process.

This was also very interesting. After I sent all the papers, the person in charge to receive my papers said that she needed my degree to make a decision, so I sent that certificate to her. So

after that I asked her what was my status, and she said that she received my papers that they were processing it. After some days I inquire her again and she said that she would be sending the admission paper. I had only about twenty days left before I had to join here, so I sent an e-mail asking her to send it by courier and she said that she would be sending it by Federal Express, so I received everything ten days before, like, on the 6th of March I was supposed to report here, so I received everything ten days before that, and there was something else. My I-20 had a problem in the place of birth. My place of birth is Thailand and nationality is Indian. But they wrote Indian in both places, so that can be taken as an act of perjury, so I sent them an e-mail saying this is like this, so they sent me another I-20, which I received about five days before I was supposed to come here. Then in five days I had to get all my vaccinations, all my medical stuff done, all my visa status done. I finished my visa status and I did what I could regard the medical stuff. So that was a big tension period (13). Like oh...my I-20 is not coming...

Tell me more about off-campus transportation.

I had an advantage and it is that I have a very distant relative, so he picked me up and I stayed in his place for two or three days, so after that I reported here. After that I had a problem because he lives in Ontario, which is very far away, it is not easy for him to come here, so he got all my groceries for the first week, but after that we had no idea about the buses and shuttles or anything, nothing, nothing. We had to ask everything. Nobody took us for a tour on the campus, and nobody told us what to do, where to go, we had to go to people, like, what should we do for this, what should we do for that. For example, if we wanted to go to the other side of the campus, how should we go? Nobody told us that there was a bus or where to get the schedule for that bus, so it was very difficult (18). I had to go to Perkins in the first week, for some work and it was very cold and I had to walk all the way from Riverknoll to there and I had no idea where it was, and like over here you don't see many people walking, in Rochester you don't see many people walking, so like...it is very difficult, how do you ask people, when you don't see anyone, that was a big problem that we faced, so (20)...

What about the shuttles on-campus and off-campus?

They should increase the service. These days, in summer, they don't even stop at the bus stops (21). They see if there is no one in there and they just pass, they don't even see at times. For example, one of my friends live in Perkins, just behind the bus stop, so whenever he sees the bus he goes out, but then the driver sees no one there so he just leaves. Even if the driver doesn't see anybody there, he should come and stop. If he is supposed to stop there, he should stop there. The other case is when the driver comes five minutes before and he just goes away (23). So for example if the bus schedule says 4:20pm, he should wait there until 4:20pm, even if he is early because the people follow the schedule and go to the bus stop.

Regarding the buses off-campus, now we have only two days in the summer. Last quarter were four days, and like the service has a very large gap. Supposed that you have to spend only one hour in Wegmans, then you have to wait for two hours then because the service has a long gap between two shuttles. They should have at least in the evenings, every hour, so people find it easily. Because how much time can you spend in Wegmans? You can't spend two hours in Wegmans (26). At least in the evenings they should have more frequent buses.

Other thing is that if you want to go off-campus on weekdays you have to pay (27). But at least whenever they have the bus they should try to schedule it more frequent otherwise is very inconvenient. Because you have to decide, "oh, we can only go in the morning because in the evenings there is a gap of two hours, and we cannot spend so much time in there.

How do you describe the food service on-campus?

Nobody told me that if you take one of those meal plans are very expensive (30). My roommate was also new here, so we decided to get stuff here and cook by ourselves. But we found that all four cooking here was a little bit difficult, so we get cooked food from Wegmans, you know like frozen food (32).

How do you feel about the variety of food on campus?

I don't think is good for me (33). Particularly since I am coming from India. In India we got wide variety of food. Of course we have non-veggie but veggie we have much much variety. I have non-vegetarians, so for me is ok, but eating non-veggie daily is not good for health. But I have been surviving daily; I have been eating non-veggie food. So I am not accustomed, we eat once in a while in India, so since I came here I have been eating so much meat, and I don't feel comfortable with that (35).

But, why do you have to eat non-veggie daily?

First, because I was working in cafeteria, and we could get free food there. Second because the food that used to buy in Wegmans was non-veggie.

But you have the option to buy just veggies in Wegmans.

Yes, but the packages that we buy, the frozen food, are just non-veggie, and there are not much variety over here. And the veggie food that we get out here in the cafeteria is not cooked in the way that we are accustomed.

How do you describe the recreational area at RIT?

I would say that is quite less. When you talked to your friends, they have been in places like New York City, California and all that stuff and when they had come here they said, oh my God. Where I am, it is a village, especially RIT, the area in RIT maybe because it is not well connected to downtown (40). Even if it is not connected to downtown there is nothing to do out here. The only thing to do is go to the movies, at times maybe go to a bar, that's it. Nothing else.

What are the things that you are interested in?

Maybe some program, or create any occasion, just for the heck of having a party, but not just party, just anything like functions.

Functions like?

Like say, on 4th of July, they could have done something on-campus. See you just need an occasion, just an excuse to have something. For example, decorate with flags...for example, on 15th of August, our independence day, in college we used to have functions with flags, and we could have a lot of competitions, which were really good. But RIT campus is like ... you only see buildings. The campus is good, only that there is nothing to do over here, unless you are working so you can pass your time, but that is not enough, we need you know, some enjoyment and get together (44).

How do you think the students can get together?

We recently had a party, so we call up some people, so that was personal. Maybe if we can pay to go to the party for example in the cafeteria. Last quarter, the Indian organization, OASIS held a program because of the festival that we were celebrating, they were charging, but they prepared that to get together or something like that. Each organization from each culture can organize some activity but keep open those activities for other people too. RIT has so many cultures, that they can organize their own functions.

What is your opinion about the advising process in your college?

He has been quite helpful, quite nice. People don't have very good opinion about him. But as far I am concern he has helped me a lot.

What about the registration process?

Actually when I came here I had no idea what to do, what courses to take (49). I went to my department, to students services, she registered me for two classes, but then she told me to talk to my adviser, so he was available in that day in the evening, so I discussed my problem with him, like...you know...he told me some course that would help me out in the computer engineering, he kept assisting me (51). He said, you can do this this this, so I was able to register the appropriate courses, but now, he is quite helpful. I went to him because I wanted to apply for a scholarship or assistantship and he talked to me nicely. But people don't have the same opinion about him.

Why not?

I think because they don't talk properly, you know...you should put yourself properly, I mean, you cannot expect something good when you talk to him improperly (53). Anyway he is going to help you anyway, whatever he is telling you is for your benefit, and people don't understand that. I know people who are facing problem for not listening to the advisers.

Another service on-campus...

I think Apartment housing should be more flexible. For example, we are three people right now living in this apartment and one of our friends is living in Perkins. He is alone now, from fall, his roommates are living because they finished and they are getting graduated and we all four wanted to shift to three bedroom apartment, but we are not getting one because they said is all booked. They say that since you are living here, we cannot shift to another apartment. They said to take a two-bedroom apartment, but we have a girl here and she cannot share the bedroom with a guy. I think they should allow people to transfer.

Regarding food, RIT should have McDonalds, KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) on campus. They should have more food chains, brand names on-campus (55). If we have this chains here we will have more variety, and also because the food in the cafeteria are two high. That is not good.

Even if that food is non-veggie?

See, that doesn't hurt us, at least you will have something. I am non-veggie so I have no problem but there are people who don't even eat eggs so for them it is very difficult. For me it is fine, I can manage it, but for those people pure vegetarian RIT should have something.

Also they should have more shops, something like Wegmans and a department store, so you can go by walking, without using a car or bus. There should be something where you can buy groceries (58). In the dorms there is one small store, but it is quite expensive, so...you cannot buy from there every time (59).

Thanks for your cooperation...

Interview J**Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT**

There weren't any formal initiation or "student get together". It was more "here in the place", getting to know morally (learning morals and values of American culture) in a first time basis rather than someone telling me "ok this is what you should do", so pretty much first time experience (2).

What do you mean by "first time basis"?

As there weren't any tour or thing like that, I had to find everything by myself. First experience. Students' life was good. Live in the dorms. Get to know more people. What else?

For example, since you made the decision of coming here, tell me your experience in the admissions process.

From the time I decided to come and the time of got the admission, it took me three months stops. I went to the website and I found the admission requirements. I sent the papers with some delays because of the holiday season, New Year. That delayed it a little bit, but I had all the papers done through the graduate enrollment. So after that I applied to the visa, all and all, three and half months stops from start to finish.

How did the accommodation system work for you?

Horrible (6). I didn't get all the information. I wanted to stay in the apartments, so I faxed them the application, and they lost it. I came here, and I had to stay in the dorms for a quarter, so. That wasn't really good, that could be better. I don't know what happened. They could keep track of it. That was like downsize.

Did you tell your situation to the Residence Life office?

Yes, I did. They said that they couldn't find the application. I think I didn't want to argue, so that's why I just took what they were offering. I was happy because at least I had a place to live. Just take whatever comes.

When you sent the application, did you send the money for the deposit, too?

The money was credited out of my tuition, so I gave them a deposit.

Did they find the deposit?

Oh, yeah...But that money came as my tuition rather than as my living expenses. It got channeled in another department (11).

How do you describe the transportation service on-campus and off-campus?

Sucks. You have a shuttle going from here to the mall. You don't get a shuttle to go downtown. You have to pay for it. You don't get shuttle during summer anywhere, except during the weekends (12). The shuttles schedules are pretty limited. It doesn't take you to town, anywhere else you have to pay for it. Unless you have a car, you are pretty much screwed. That's it. It works if you want to kill time. But if you really want to get where you want, shuttles are not the best option.

So what would be the ideal bus for you?

Well, they do a pretty good job except that they reduced the hour time in summer. They could have more frequent hours. Instead of going four or five times in the evening, they could have hours in the morning and afternoon. Starting at 10:00am.

That means weekdays or weekends?

Weekdays also because at the moment they just got into the summer, Saturdays and Sundays... So that could be worked out.

What is your opinion about the food service on-campus?

Excellent!! Thumbs up. It is quite nice. That's one of the good things about RIT. They make sure that you eat properly fat (just food that makes you get fat) for a little while. I was in the debit system when I was in the dorm, so that was really convenient (20). I could go to any dining or corner store and use my card like Ninja Weapon, go in there and say: "here is my debit card, give me food." So that works. Wegmans is pretty nice; now that I am living in the apartments, microwave it if you can, otherwise already made works for me. I don't get a lot of time to cook.

Are you accustomed to the food?

Well, they could have more selection. I don't know, maybe more Chinese food would be nice. They have decent selection. They have new food services like "menu renewals" almost everyday and "new chef choice". All the cafeterias, they all have different menus in different days.

What is your opinion about the advising process in your college?

Ah. I was pretty much "shell man". At that time I was just getting accustomed to the quarter system. They were friendly. They went through all the papers and explained them to me everything. They were pretty helpful.

What do you mean by "They"?

My professor, the one in the information technology department. But all the people here are extremely friendly, actually they sit down and make the time to speak to you and make sure you know everything (28). They are used to it. So, that worked pretty well.

Do you think there's another service that should be provided?

They could have more tours, trips, or something for the international students. So far I have seen a lot, like they could have some trips during the breaks (29). They could organize trips; I don't know, down to the city, to the main attractions, at least something. They are not giving at all tours guide, and you could be more focused in the international aspects. When I was in United Kingdom (UK), every week they had trips to major sightseeing places or just places of major interest. You only had to go to the international students office and they always had something. So I think that area at RIT needs a little more work. Frankly speaking, they don't have a lot to do. I would prefer to go to an organized activity instead of going on my own (31). That would make a lot of difference.

What about other recreational activities?

Well the gym. That's pretty much all there is on-campus. Since this is a dry-campus you need to go out, which is nice. They could have something more on campus for students because there isn't a lot to do. Except for the SAU, and that ends on that. Except for the eating facilities, there is nothing else to do. For example, the game room in the basement is more like an expressible site (relax, enjoy). It definitely needs more work.

So, what would be an attraction for you?

I don't know, just a place that you can sit down and have a nice conversation, something more like Starbucks coffee that would be nice, other than having SAU to meet.

I mean a nightclub in the campus won't be a really bad idea, but I know that won't be real. I think RIT had a "dance floor" or something like that five years ago, but they shut it down for some reason, I don't know. Maybe giving more tours during the weekends, I guess. Something I really don't want to do is stay in an empty room and go to sleep (38).

Thanks for your cooperation...

Interview K

Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT

The first time I saw the name of RIT was in a magazine named America Overview, and it introduced some America education and culture and something like that, and it introduced RIT as university with a good reputation, and it has a history for over a hundred of years.

How did you decide to come to RIT and not to another school?

Because it provides scholarship, financial aid.

Tell me more about the admission process.

I think it was similar for all the universities here. First, I took the TOEFL and GRE exam and then send all the documents required. Actually, there was a lady who answered all my questions, and if for example there was something uncompleted on the papers she will e-mail me to send her.

Tell me your experience about the accommodations.

Well I sent all my papers to the admission office and it was their responsibility to send my papers to the housing apartments office. Before coming here I found an international student friendship, I forgot the name, a family that will help you (4). But before coming here I found my apartment in the Internet. I went to the housing connection.

Tell me more about that...

They gave a list of the people who were looking for roommates and I called them. But those international calls were very expensive, they cost me a lot because I had to try one-by-one (6). It is not convenient. The apartment that I was living before is very far away from the campus that was the reason because I moved to here. I thought that I was delayed for applying for housing on-campus, but my other classmates applied on time to the apartments and they couldn't find anyplace to live for the first couple of weeks, so they had to live in the hotels, but RIT paid for that, but still it is inconvenient.

How do you describe the food service on-campus?

So so.

What would you change in the cafeteria?

The price is a little high and also they need more variety (10).

What do you mean by "variety"?

I think the food should be changed frequently. Different people have different taste, so I like Asian food and American, but I would like to try others too (14).

How do you describe the transportation on-campus and off-campus?

Before I got my car I had to take the shuttle bus. It is not very convenient because if you need something during the week, you have to wait until the weekend to buy it. And when you go you have to wait for an hour between the shifts, and sometimes if you forget the time, well there is no bus to go to Wegmans or Marketplace Mall.

The shuttle on campus, it is fine. Now I am living in Riverknoll

What about when you were living in Racquet club?

It was fine, now it had improved, now is on time.

What about the registration process?

In the first quarter I didn't know how to register my courses, so the adviser in the College of Business, actually his secretary helped me.

Tell me more about the orientation day.

It was helpful but as a new person I couldn't record all the details that they told me at that day.

So what do you suggest?

There should be organizations; I mean some students can help the new students, not just for the first day but also for the first couple of weeks (19).

How could those students help you?

If you have any question you can call them, and they will tell you

What about the PALS?

Yes, they are very helpful.

What would be another way that those senior students could help you?

Sometimes you may need a ride because you don't know how to go anywhere (21).

How do you describe recreational activities at RIT?

In my opinion, they are not enough because international students who come here want to know America deeper, I think there should be more activities for them, especially on weekends or during the vacation. They should know something. Either in culture or society (24).

What kind of activities would be interesting for the international students?

I think, the bigger problem for the international students is to speak English. Sometimes they want to talk with some native American, but it is really difficult to find someone to talk with you, longer, longer than “how are you”, “goodbye” (25).

What other service would you recommend should be created at RIT?

The most important thing that I need is to talk to American students to improve my English. I need someone to talk with me often.

Tell me about your expectations about RIT

RIT is good. Just that the standard of living is so much boring (27).

Thanks for your cooperation...

Interview L**Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT**

I think it took a lot of time to arrive to RIT and especially when you send your papers by normal mail, it make take one or two months, sometimes, so it is very time consuming.

When did you start applying?

In 1998, in fall. I came last fall, so that means that I spent one year.

How did you apply to RIT?

I found the school from the Internet, and I did some research about the major and I liked this major very much, so I download the application from the Internet, so then I sent all the documents that they needed (2).

You said that you sent the application and it lasted two months by mail...

It is so hard to say two months, but normally it takes one and a half months. It depends.

How did you know that they received your papers?

After one month I tried to e-mail admission office and wait for their reply (3). But because the admission office receive thousands of e-mails everyday, so all the e-mails are crossed up, so they maybe replied to me after one or two weeks. It is hard to tell you when they are going to reply to you.

Then after that, what did you do?

So I asked them how was the process of my application, so they told that it was on progress, so they asked me to wait after I submitted all the documents. So I got admission in April 1999.

How did you know about their decision?

They e-mailed me first and they told me that the formal documents, the formal admission package would send to me. Most of the time was just wait and wait, it is just time consuming and also you don't know what is going to happen, so you have to be patient.

So you received the package with all the documents about RIT?

I received the admission letter, the information about the apartments and information about the school.

In the accommodation information, what did you receive?

I received the application form, introduction to all the complexes on-campus. So I filled out that application and I sent it by fax because I didn't want to wait.

When you came here, how did you manage to get an apartment?

Well, before coming to the United States I got the apartment already because I deposit the \$200 so they assured that they got the apartment for me.

So you knew what the apartment number was?

No, I knew that I got an apartment but I didn't know which apartment, they told me to go the rental office. So when I came here I went to the rental office they told me the details. I went to the Residence Life to sign the contract and then I brought it to the rental office.

How long did that process take you?

Two days. I signed the contract the first day and then the second day I went to the rental office to get the key for the apartment.

Where did you stay the first day?

I stayed with my friends (8); they picked me up, so (9)...

How do you describe the food service on-campus?

For me all American food taste the same, I cannot tell you if they are good or not (10). They are just common food. It is not something really delicious, not something like a restaurant.

What would you change in the cafeteria?

I haven't gone to the cafeteria a lot because I live in the apartments so we can cook. So most of the times we cook here.

What do you like there?

I prefer pizza because it is something that we have in China; I know what it tastes exactly. Also I like the salad there. But it is hard because there are so many different foods, food that I am not familiar with, that no one had introduced them to me, unless you have an American friend that take you there and tell you something (15). You just arrive here and you don't have friends at that time, so it is quite hard.

How do you manage to live here alone?

It is hard but since you apply for a school and you decide to go abroad to study you have to be prepare to live alone, but that is good because it is valuable, worthy to receive education here, find a job here and have a better life (17). Everything depends here on you, and this student life

it is not the life that you are going to have forever, so it doesn't matter (18). My mom and father call me every week, so it is fine, because we can stay in a good connection.

How do you describe the transportation on-campus and off-campus?

Oh my God!! It was awful (20).

Why it was awful?

Imagine that everything depends on bus, so if the bus is late then you have to wait, you have to be very well organized to catch the bus, and also pay good attention to the time.

What is your opinion about the bus schedule?

Most of the times the bus is on time. I am quite satisfy with the buses except for the break times, the buses don't come from another route, they change the route (24). There was one time when I stayed waiting for the bus for one hour, so I had to walk to my house during the midnight, at 11:00pm, because I tried to catch the last bus, but it didn't come.

Where were you?

I was in CIMS. Regarding the shuttle off-campus, It is on time and it is convenient but still it is very time consuming because all around, around, around.

So what do you prefer?

I had not choice, I had to take the bus.

But if you could change that, how would you arrange that?

Well there is no way to change it because it has to pick up everybody. Sometimes when there is no bus on schedule, we can call campus safety but they cannot do anything. For example, the other day was 11:00pm and we call them but they told us that they had only one transport that nobody was there, that they couldn't do anything. I was so scared at that time, because at that time if something bad happens to me who will come and help me, you know (28).

What did they tell you?

It was 11:00pm and they asked to walk from CIMS to the library and there would be the bus at 11:40pm that was they said. But that happened just once.

Have you tried again?

No, I don't want to try again. I just try to go home early.

What about the registration process?

I was a little bit late. For example, imagine that tomorrow the classes start and I arrived yesterday (29). So I was in a hurry. I tried to register for my classes with the help of my adviser. I tried to register but everything was full.

So what did you do?

So I had to change the idea, I had to switch to other classes. One of those was very difficult. You are supposed to take it maybe after two or three quarters, but I had to take them, because there was no other choice (32).

What did your adviser say?

He tried to put me in other courses, but all of them were full. He did help, he try to call the other professors because the classes were closed.

What about the second quarter?

Much better because you can register for your classes in the middle of the first quarter, so you can have more choices, you can arrange it.

How do you describe the recreational area at RIT?

I love the gym. I go there often. I go to the swimming pool very quite often too, especially right now, like three times during the week.

What about the activities offered to international students on campus?

I don't know how to say it but I feel that it is hard for the international students to join the American activities; especially for the graduate students because most of our classes are in the evening, and in the daytime you have to do the work for the professors, sometimes assistantship or another work (36). Most of the students do some work, so all the time are occupied.

So what is your suggestion?

I hope they would have more activities for the graduate students. I think undergraduate students have more activities than graduate students. They have more organizations so they have more activities.

How did you find RIT?

I found RIT in the Internet so I checked the webpage of the school for a long time and I got all the information, so I knew the school a quite well before coming here. So actually I knew how the school would be (38).

What were your expectations about RIT before coming here?

It is hard to tell because when you are in China, you cannot imagine a life here. It is quite different and also it is the first time to go far away from my parents, this is my first time going abroad to study. You will have a lot of impacts, especially cultural impact and differences. But it is a good experience for you, and I like the changes because I like how is the world outside, and see different cultures, different styles, so you can see all the colors in the world, and get more experience; now that I have the energy instead of staying at home (40).

Remember those first days at RIT. Did you think at that time of any service that RIT should provide?

Well, you know on the first day we have the orientation, right? But it is just a general introduction, so I think that after that general orientation, it is better to separate those students by different countries. So the people who organize those activities can invite senior students, they can sit down with you, and talk in the same language, because you are from the same country, so you can talk with the old students and they will share with you some of their experiences. I think that they can tell you the most convenient way to do things, you know, and give you more advices.

How long should that group orientation be?

Maybe just for two or two and a half hours, just to talk with them and then after that if those new students need more help, the old students can give them all the ways to contact them, you know, e-mail address, phone. So if they have problems they can ask you, it is very easy for the people from the same country to make friends, instead of making friends with other cultures, you know...it takes time, but the people from the same country just one second and then you are friends.

What else you can tell me about other services that should be provided?

Also, I think that the department can arrange some kind of orientation, and talk more about the major, so you can share the experiences with the old students, I think it is very important, I think (44). It is not just arrive here and know nothing about what kind of courses should I take first (45). It is hard to decide by yourself, and those old students may have different ideas that you can share with them (46). That will help a lot.

What else do you suggest?

I wish we could have more activities for the international students, especially for the graduate students, especially graduate students, something like sports, competitions only with international students, and maybe more BBQ and parties. That would be a lot of fun, I think if you have parties with international students.

What would be the purpose of those activities?

To make friends, so you won't feel that you are alone, it is much better. Especially when you arrive here, you have so many differences if you arrive here and you don't have friends you feel so lonely and hopeless.

What would be another purpose for those parties other than just make friends?

Also, it can help you to get familiar with the school and study quickly. If you settle down, then you can concentrate on study, right?

Also, I hope they can arrange introduction to American food and American culture, something like lessons, American history (51).

What would be the best way to offer those lessons?

Just like an orientation or a class, a free class that you can invite all international students to join. So they could have some teachers to talk about American history or maybe American population or states of America. Talk about America.

What would be the schedule for that activity?

I think that the cultural orientation should be organized earlier, maybe in the first week and then the other activities, like competitions, can be in weekends.

Thanks for your cooperation...

Interview M

Tell me how your experience was the first 9 months at RIT.

It was a very pleasant experience. I applied early, by about, I think I got admission packet as early as last week of April with my I-20, so I had enough time to make up my mind and I had enough time to fix up a housing. That's I think, one of the major problems that International Students face and they often blame the college for it, because they themselves can't (make up their mind about traveling to a foreign country).

I worked in the admission's department, so I know how late some students send their applications, and then they expect, ok, I am doing everything in a hurry. There's a deadline, which is list in the admission's book. If people actually keep the deadline, these problems won't happen. I know this situation because I have friends who have come to America in the fourteen-day notice, which is like very tough for us (international students). We need time to make up our mind. We need to talk to people out here. I think that's about the admission process.

When I came down to RIT it was a very good situation, in the sense that it was a Sunday evening. My housing office had closed. But, I met a gentleman who made sure that I was put on a hotel and RIT paid the expenses. And the next morning they helped me to shift to my home (8).

The only problem, which I perhaps had, was the selection of courses (9). Our college follows a policy where the courses are more part-time students oriented than full-time students oriented. So maybe there is a course offered once in a year, and you wait for one year to take that course (12). Then, you find out that the day you are supposed to take that course is clashing with another course, which you waited one year. So, that means that you have to give up one course. But, why should I? I'm paying quite a lot of money for my education. Why should I make compromises simply because my college can't provide me the course? So I think, that's one of the few complaints that I have regarding my school: they are very oriented towards part-time students. Part-time students don't care. They take one course per quarter. That means that they last for the entire program 4 or 5 years. So, once in those four years, they can pick up the course. But I am in a very tight schedule. I can't compromise. That's a big big trouble.

How do you describe the food service on-campus?

I hate it. (Laugh). Well, I shouldn't say that. I used to work for the RITZ, and I used to have lunch there because lunch was free and I used to hate free lunch, as well. But, I guess that's because we are very used to have spicy food and stuff like that and it's very expensive. It's definitely expensive. I have even seen American students complaining how expensive food is in Grace's. A meal cost as 8 bucks, which is like pretty high, so I guess I don't know why the food prices cannot be brought down.

I think RIT should bring about a few local vendors like McDonalds and all, who have much more competitive prices than what our school cafeteria offers. They should subsidize the price a little bit. I understand they are all profit making pockets, but still we are students, yeah, we can't pay

for that. I have noticed that the lowest wage is \$5.31, and that is the price you pay for a meal. That means that one-hour wage cost for a meal, and full-time students cannot work for more than 4 hours a day. You don't have time for that. But you have 3 meals, what you can earn in a day goes just eating (15). The food service should bring down the prices. There's no excuse for that.

What about the variety of food?

I guess it's quite a bit of it. Commons, Grace's, Ritz, South. I think that shouldn't be a problem. I don't like what they serve, but I shouldn't say that they don't serve anything.

Why you don't like it?

I'm used to have more spicy food (18). I can eat hamburgers one day, but it's not my staple food. I would much rather prefer to eat spicy food. Another thing is that we have so many students from South America, so many students from India, Korea, who are all used to spicy food, so I don't know why RIT don't change their menus. I have known colleges in Texas, and they have at least one international food item in every restaurant (23). Make some Chinese food. I think everybody loves Chinese food, even American students love Chinese food. I guess they should look up to us a little bit more, considering the fact that there are about at least 600 hundred students from India and from different continents who are here at RIT. I think you could just try to mold the food a little bit more. Maybe make one preparation in the weekdays, which is an Indian food, I think that should work out. It shouldn't be difficult.

How do you evaluate the transportation on-campus and off-campus?

The Mall shuttles are very good idea and especially for students who just come down, and they depend totally on the mall shuttle. But, it would be better if they have maybe one or two morning shuttles on the days, instead of just providing them from Thursday to Sunday. The reason is because often you need to go out on the Saturday morning to your bank, and stuff like that, work that you cannot do after 6 and RTS has two on Saturdays and 1 on Sunday. There are some works, which you can do only in the morning. For example, if you want to go to a library outside, Saturday will be the only day.

Transportation on-campus: I have never really use the shuttle, but it is not because there wasn't any, it is just because I prefer to walk. There's no complaint about this. But, yes, RIT is not very well connected with public transportation (31).

What places would you like to go on the bus?

Especially just for going out, just for hanging around, places like Park Ave. or Downtown, Highwater Falls (32). I remember when I came down, RIT had some activities out of the campus. I went to Highwater Falls and Buffalo. I was very happy, even when very few people knew about it, the people who went enjoyed a lot. They should keep up stuff like that. It means a lot for international students. I reached here on Sunday and Thursday and Saturday they took us out, it was very good.

What about the recreational activities?

Very good. For independent recreation, there are very good opportunities available. There are definitely ways that you can freak out (relax). But another thing that I would like to see, that in the beginning days each college could organize ice-breaking sessions (38). In these sessions the domestic students and international students could get together for maybe a BBQ. A little bit of interaction would be very nice (39).

We are generally always tend to stay in our own group. Ok, this is my group from India. I think domestic students could take a little bit more of initiative. Maybe in the orientation day, just a half an hour, ask full-time students to come down, talk to us, maybe let's go for a movie together. I think that should work out better. I think colleges could do more about it. My college could include something in this fall orientation where we can all come down and help out with that.

How did you feel about the orientation day?

The orientation was good. Exhausted in the 2 days that I was held. But we could have done with a little more.

What would you change on that?

I would change the span. Two days is not enough for an orientation. Maybe have it on a rolling basis, throughout the week because it doesn't make sense having 8 sessions on a day. You remember nothing. Your first session is on financial information; ok, by the time you understood like what your obligations are, the next session is a session on assistantship. Ok, I understood that session also; ok, the next session is on CO-OP, ok fine. I understood. I need to do a CO-OP, the next session is a registration of classes, so by the time I registered the classes, gone through the horror of closed and opened classes, I forgot where I am (44).

Having during the week one session a day, along with the classes. I know there are classes holding in the afternoon from 2 to 4, so you can have a session between those hours and during the first week or first 3 weeks. That works better.

Another thing that should be included in the orientation day is that we have absolutely no idea what classes we should take, and there are maybe one or two faculty members who are dealing with problems of about 40 people sitting down. So why not have some students who have taken that course, they know what I should take (47). I would be in a very good position to help people joining this fall to know what courses they should take. Why not include some students in it? I understand there's a staff. But, you cannot have one staff behind every student. Ask some students to come down and help out while they are registering, so nobody makes any wrong choice. We know all about add/drop, withdraw...bla, bla... But, a new student doesn't know (49). We didn't know anything about it when we joined. I'm sure you also said: "what the...are they talking about, what withdraw, fail or what?"

Tell me more about your adviser.

Ok, they are very good people. They have always helped me when I need it, but somehow I have always felt that advisers are more pro-college than pro-me, like they will tell me for example, let's put it this way. I want to take a specific course, and instead of they finding out how to take that course, they say: "ok, this course is not being offered, why you don't take some other course". But, that's not what an adviser should do. An adviser should advise you, why should I take a compromise course? That's not very fair (51). I think an adviser at least should make you feel, ok he/she is my MAN; he/she is my MENTOR, stuff like that, I think that is missing. There is a cold touch somewhere. They are thinking about the college, this class is not very full so let me put this guy in this class.

But maybe that class will help you.

I know that class won't help me.

Why not?

Because that class is not in my major. Ok in the beginning the adviser will know better than I am, but throughout one year I have learned all about my concentration, and maybe I am wrong, but I have a plan checked out for me. Like, I'm responsible now. I remember one incident about when one student couldn't take a class, and he went and asked the Dean. I was standing there. The student said: "I can't take this specific class", and the Dean came and told him: "ok, fine, you can't take it out here, see if it is offered in any other college, and I'll make sure that you can take the class in some other college" (54). I was very happy to hear that. That means the Dean is thinking on you. That's the way advisers should be, but my adviser has unfortunately never said something like this.

Before coming to RIT, when you were still in your country, what were your expectations about RIT?

I was definitely not expecting so many Indians.

Is that bad or good?

Oh, well. I thought it was going to be like "America". I am going to be in a strange land, with strange people, but I feel that I am more at home here than I was at my real home. Yes, I got everything that I was expecting. But, I know there are a lot of people who have experienced some shock (56). There are a lot of things that you are expected to do it by yourself, which at home there are always people to do it for you. I think that's one big thing that a lot of people should prepare their minds. Here, you won't have anybody to wash your clothes, do your dishes or do your cooking. I guess those are the things that we take for granted when we are at home, but it is not that simple.

Can you think of another service that should be created at RIT?

They should definitely, a small...no but, I guess there's a corner store. But maybe they could have another one around.

Oh, yes, another important thing, they should definitely have a place to eat which is open until 10-12pm at night. Because a lot of us have a night class and we are in a class from 6:00pm to 9:00pm, and most of the eating dining's close at 7:00pm. So, there are times when we have to go to bed without dinner. So at least have a small deli, maybe open a Dunkin Donuts, which is open the odd hours. You cannot expect us to have dinner at 4:30pm and stay until...Come to class and then do not eat anything for the rest of night (60). I think it's a very good idea opening a deli-sandwich place, at least for the full-time students who are taking classes at night, it helps.

And very often we are in the library studying and you tend to over shut our time, and then you don't have food. Especially in the weekdays when there are no shuttles to go out of campus.

Can you think of any other service that RIT could offer to help international students get accustomed the first day of classes?

I don't know, I presume that PAL'S thing (concept), which is organized by the international student office. I myself haven't experienced too much of it, but I have heard people saying that they are really helpful in settling and stuff like that.

I guess PAL'S is organized by the international student office at an institutional level, but every individual college could come out with a small network. It is easy to manage 70 students coming instead of 700 students coming in. This is something that I have been trying to implement in my college, as well. Get a group of 4 or 5 students who like to do stuff like this. Nothing, it's just like the first day at Wegmans, too. The first day at Wegmans, you don't know what the ** to pick up. You go to buy sugar and you find eight different kinds of sugar. Guys!! I just need sugar; I don't need TYPES of sugar.

I remember a very funny incident when I went to buy sugar and instead of buying sugar, I got icing sugar. I didn't know the difference between those two (63).

Thanks for your cooperation...

Interview N**Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT**

I think I didn't have any problem actually because my cousin was here and he was in the same program than I am doing right now. I came to this college because of him. He explained to me what was the college about, so I was interested because of him. So I came here, and the moment I came here he graduated and he left. So he had some friends here, so when I came here he already told them that I was coming here so I needed an apartment, so my apartment was all set, so I came here. Actually I came to New Jersey and he was there and he drove and dropped me here and he introduced me to all his friends, then he left. Then the next day, the guys in the apartment took me to the college and told me what I had to do, that I had to go and register for courses, they told me that I had to get my ID.

Did you go to the orientation?

Yes, I did go. Everybody has to go to the orientation, but before that I knew almost everything because I came here ten days before. Then the professor in the department is a friend of my dad, so I knew him, I met him there before, so I talked to him about my classes and assistantship and all that. So I started to work in the lab, just like that.

But because my cousin was there I got an apartment and all that stuff, otherwise I would have to come with all my boxes and run around for an apartment. And that is quite difficult. That is one of the things that RIT has to improve.

I know that you had your cousin here, but how was the process of admission?

I did send an application for an apartment. There were four options but I didn't know which one was good, so I just put them in a random order and just send them. But there wasn't any response from them. Usually that happen, everybody send the application for the apartment along with the application for the College, but they don't get anything until they come here, and even after they come here, they have to stay with somebody else, only after a week or two they might get it or they might not get it. Even I didn't get it. Nothing. I didn't get any response from them.

How do you describe the food service on-campus?

I haven't been there a lot of times because we usually cook at home, so sometimes I go. But it is very rarely. I find it a little expensive. But as I said, I haven't been there a lot of times. I have been at the RITZ and at the other one that is in the same building. I would say that the food is not that good. The quantity is not that good I would say. I don't know. I had a chicken sandwich and it was quite small in comparison with the price that I was paying (19). I don't know about other food. For example, I haven't had salads, so I am not quite sure about that.

What about the quality of the food?

Quality was good, variety good (20).

Tell me how you got adapted to the food, if you needed to.

Basically, I am not vegetarian. I used to eat chicken, fish back home. So because I am a non-vegetarian, it wasn't a problem. I could get a chicken sandwich, everything here (22). So for me it wasn't any problem at all. I never used to eat beef back home, so I ate beef here for the first time and I liked it. But that was because I was non-vegetarian. Even if you go off-campus you can have Burger King.

Tell me more about the transportation on-campus and off-campus.

The shuttle on-campus is good. Also we have a shuttle to go to Wegmans. I didn't use it because my roommates have a car and we go for shopping once a week.

What other services do you think should be created on-campus?

For example, the international students office is doing a good job. But they are just like three people there. So if in the first week you want to have an appointment you have to wait for four days. And at that time you don't know what to do, unless your friends are there to help you, maybe you should get immediate help (28). So people should come earlier to get accustomed and to get settled down before the classes start, so they can find jobs and all that. That might be a good thing to do. Maybe they should tell what kind of jobs they have available, how to search those jobs, all the jobs that you could do (31). I don't know if the international students orientation they tell you what are the rules for working, how many hours, if you can go off-campus, I don't know if they told me in the middle, after the classes started. I am not very sure. I think they tell that in the orientation.

So how did you get the information about how many hours you could work?

I had a meeting with one of the advisers in the international student office because I had a problem with my I-20.

What happened?

It is a big story, actually. I left my I-20 in my luggage and the luggage didn't show up when I needed it. So that was a problem, so they gave me thirty days to go to Buffalo and get it stamped, so my baggage came after four days, then I went to Buffalo. Previously I didn't talk to the international student office, I just went directly to the IRN office in Buffalo and they took my I-20 and they said that they mail it to me after three months. So when I came here, I met Cookie and she said, "why didn't you come here before you went there? You could give it to me, I could give to them and I could mail it to you within a month". Because if I don't have my I-20 I cannot apply for my social security card, I cannot work here, I cannot get pay, so three months are gone for me. But then Cookie talked to someone and I could get it within a month.

What is your opinion about the advising process in your college?

Well, the day I came I had a meeting with my department chair. He said the he was free in the afternoon, so I schedule a meeting at 2:pm. Then he told me these are the courses available in fall, so he gave all that I had to do. He said these are the concentration courses; take the concentration courses whenever they are offered. Electives you can take whatever you want, but concentration courses are going to be offered just in this quarter, so you better take them.

After the first quarter, how did you manage to register for your courses?

After that I had my course booklet, so I saw them. So for example, I wanted to take three courses, but just two were offered, which I have to take, so I went and talk with the head of my department, so he used to said, ok, I can replace this course with this, ok, take it. And also, I used to talk to my cousin, the one who graduated here, so he tells me what classes are better, too.

How do you describe the recreational area at RIT?

I think that the gym facility is good, but I am not sure if I use it for the first two quarters because I thought I didn't have time, I mean it takes time to get accustomed to the system, so the first quarter I was working, taking three courses, I didn't know how to get used to the system, so I didn't have time (40). The second quarter I had some time, so I went there few times but the third quarter I used to go there frequently because I got used to know at what times I had to study.

Thanks for your cooperation...

Interview O

Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT.

The first thing that I faced a problem with was the culture. I came straight from India to Rochester and from the airport I went directly to the Hall, Residence Hall. I didn't know anybody. Those people help me a lot. They showed me the road, everything, but after that I didn't know what to do, are you getting me? So the first thing the international student organization or whoever should do is they should be more organized. They should get together all the international students, not freshmen, just all international students (4). They should show them all different parts, this is the campus, and little bit of ethical things, like how to eat, supposed, how to drink, because many of the Indians they don't know, like you shouldn't eat this, drink that, and basically we don't eat beef, and the first thing I got was beef, and I told them to give me a veggie plate, but I should mention no meat (6). That was like the first thing.

The second thing was transportation. I didn't know how to go, how to commute. For example, I was looking for another apartment, the only way I could do it was walking, keeping in mind that you have to attend the classes in the morning and in the evening, the only way was walking, I had to walk. Literally I have walked Racquet Club, Perkins, Colony Manor; and everybody was doing the same thing. Because I didn't have any idea and I was not very sure about the shuttles, too. I don't know. And there is one thing that has to be given special importance, ok, this is the bus, it goes to all different apartments, I didn't know that.

Tell me more about the admission process.

Especially the brochure for the accommodations, the apartments, is not very clear. There are so many options, you can just see the photographs, I didn't know the difference between the residence and the apartments. I didn't know what was a strobe apartment (for NTID students), I didn't have any idea, and I wasn't very sure about the rules. I didn't know how the process of assigning roommates worked, they just mention that three or four guys will share this house and three or four guys will share the other house or how long was the contract. It wasn't very clear to me. I don't know if it was a general problem...because in India it is not like that, I know about that, for sure. That is one thing. If it is possible, they should send the list of the students staying in those apartments, right? Especially someone from that particular country, so that I can talk to that person beforehand, are you getting me? If someone staying in Racquet Club, so if I talk to him I can have a better idea, right? Then talking to the apartment housing people. Because they are not partial to any apartment, they just say, this is good, this is good, and this is good. But for me as an Indian student I should talk to someone, especially an Indian who is staying in each of the apartment complex, so I can have a better idea, and if possible that person can recommend me to one of his friends who is looking for a roommate, in that way it will be helpful. We get different roommates, right? People that you don't know where they come from, or in what field they are. For example, my roommates can be from Arts, so if it is possible I will definitely prefer someone from is studying in my same field, in the College of Business. It should be something like that.

Tell me about the process of sending in the admission application form.

I didn't get any reply. I sent the application and I didn't get any reply about which apartment I was assigned or what complex. So the first time I came here I reported in the information desk, then I came to know that I have been assigned to the Residence Halls.

How did you come here?

I just got the admission letter from the Admission Department, and you have to report at this place, nothing. I came one day before, I remember, it was August the 29th around 6:00pm (17). So I went to the top building, what is that? The tall building, I went there, downstairs. So I told the cab driver, I told him, he knew because is one of the well known part of RIT probably. That guy took me to that place, some people were waiting outside and there was a big board outside saying "Welcome International Students". From there they told me that I was assigned to this house. They assigned me to the dorms. The first problem I faced was that my roommate, I don't know why, but he was Jewish and that guy didn't want any Christian, Hindu or Muslims and according to him, he specified beforehand to the apartment housing people (20). He talked to the Residence Life and said "Assign people from my caste or you don't assign anyone. He could very well afford it; money was not a problem for him. But after I came here, it was a problem for him. So, I also knew that he has been there for one year. So definitely I was in a big big bad position. So I immediately started looking for another house.

How did you start looking for another house?

I met a friend in the first international student gathering, the first night. He was looking for a house too because he was also assigned to the dorms and he was not at all familiar (22). So we start looking for apartments. For one entire week we were like...search, search, search and walk, walk, walk, so finally we found an apartment in Racquet club where two people staying there. They were looking for other two. That was a good experience.

How do you describe the food service at RIT?

Especially for international students, for the first few days are very tough, because you don't eat all this food. After spending some time we are familiar with this food.

What do you mean with "familiar"?

Means we could like, I haven't seen a proper pizza in India. I never used to like it. I used to have dahl, and rice. But after coming here, this is totally different. For few days I wanted something, which is similar to my home, I didn't do it for one month. But for the first few days I did wanted that. So, RIT should have an organization or senior students who take for the students, for example, Indian students to the Indian restaurants, to show us those places (27). It would be good for me and for the rest of the Indians here. Then we could meet each other and help each other. Because at least we found some place to share our similar things, like food.

Another problem that I faced for the first days was phone calls. I didn't know how to make a call. I didn't have a card or anything. I didn't know where I could go or where I could buy it.

Are you getting me? And I had just few money, everything was in draft form. If I deposit those drafts in the bank, then only I could withdraw some money, so that was another question that I had, from India you cannot get enough cash.

Let's talk about the telephone service.

I talked to one of the senior guys, I asked for his number but then he said that he was having some problem (30). His point was very correct because there were so many people like me, just asking for numbers. Those numbers that we use come from a company call UNITEL. Each person has his own number because the bill account comes from that number. So you cannot give that number to everybody. So he said, you have to buy a card, but I didn't know where to go or how to go. So that was a big problem.

How do you describe the transportation on-campus and off-campus?

Well, on-campus I don't have any complaint but off-campus they should probably have more frequencies, especially for the first few weeks, you have to buy everything fresh and you don't know what do you want also, you are not that sure, so it should be more frequent, and it should stops in more places (33). The reason is that you are not very familiar with the system over here.

What about the registration process?

I didn't know anything, how to register, and how many subjects to take, so I talked to one of the advisers and basically I went to the college of business, and they did a good job. They guided me in everything, they told me you should take this this this, and they registered in fact for me and they gave me the schedule.

What happened in the second quarter regarding registration?

It was a little bit problematic because the registration started like one month before the quarter starts and I was like I didn't have a clue of it, so most of the classes were full by that time.

So what did you do?

I didn't take those classes, I couldn't (38). I had to schedule them sometime later, in another quarters, so I learned the lesson at that time: try to keep in touch with everything.

So, what would your advice be to the future international students about keeping in touch with everything?

Every two or three weeks do visit your student office. Ask them when the classes start and everything new, just ask them, and the second thing be in touch with your own classmates, don't stay in a small group, don't limit yourself to few people all the time, try to get along with other people, get along with native people, and in that way definitely you will definitely come to know what is going on around you. And always keep looking SIS.

How did you come to know about SIS?

I was told in the Students' office. Like this is the way you can register your classes, or you come to us and we can do anything for you. The third form to register is through phone, for that you have to know the course number (41). So that was ok. I think.

Did you go to the orientation day?

I went to one of the orientations, I missed the other, and because there are so many things going on that I didn't know what is important and what is not (42).

How do you evaluate that orientation?

It was ok, but it didn't make a lot of sense to me because I was not very sure what was going on around with me. I was more worried to calling to India and informing to my parents, and I didn't have e-mail account in RIT, I was more worried about that and to get accustomed to this place also, so another suggestion is that before they actually start the classes, they should come at least three days beforehand, everything should be organized before the actual classes start. In my case, the orientation was going on along with the classes, and it was a mess. I didn't feel like going to the orientation because the classes were so hectic for me, everything was new, I had to buy the books, I had to talk to students, I had to talk to the professors and figure out what was going around me and also do my assignments, and at that time I couldn't go the orientation (46).

How did you manage the bank account?

Oh, that was a good thing. I was lucky. At that time I was looking for the apartment, so in the way to the Apartment Housing office there was the HSBC bank. Luckily I saw them so I talked to them, and do this and that, and I opened my account. They helped me a lot.

Tell me more about the recreational area at RIT.

At the first time I didn't know anything about that area. The gym is small little; it should be a little bit bigger. The money they are taking. If you see the total standard of RIT, gym and other facilities are really small. I think RIT can afford to have a gym in each one of the apartment complexes, around a thousand of people living in each of the apartment complexes. They can very well afford individual gyms, and the central gym it is very small.

What about activities offered to international students?

Not very good.

Why not?

I don't know what is the problem probably the organization policies are not efficient or people don't have time or...anything, it is not good. Not many things are happening. It is not good.

Have you gone to at least one of those activities?

Yeah, I have been in some of them.

What happened?

It was good; they had food, dances or something. But they should organize those activities more frequently. When they happen they are good and people should take more active participation. And something happens and that is that you don't even know when those activities are going on. They should try another effective way to convey what is going on.

What activities should be done for international students here?

I can tell you, at least some sports. We have special sports like cricket and we have some other games too. Matches, in a bigger way. Sometimes they try to organize cricket matches in the gym, and it is very small. So those people cannot provide it because it is full. So we have to play at night. They should have their own facilities. And when you play cricket you feel that you are playing something absurd, it shouldn't be like that. They should have more facilities. And if you take double tennis, you don't have good facilities. I used to play below the bookstore, there is a student recreation and the table is not at all good, and you don't have space to swing your arms. Of course I know why it is like that. Because hardly anybody plays and in such place nobody can play for long time, ok? So they should provide another place for double tennis and some other games too.

What other service do you think should be created at RIT?

We desperately need a food store. Anything. Could be Burger King, Wendy's or anything. It doesn't matter if they are small or big, we don't have any shop within the campus. We should have something like that.

What would be the variety?

Whatever is available in the market, if you can make it is good. If I have more choices it is better for me. For example, I like Chinese food, so get the contract to someone who can deliver good food at RIT; I don't have to limit myself with canteens, cafeterias, right? So that is a good choice.

What other shops should be included there?

Shops like dollar tree (58). You need things from there. You don't need to go so far to get it. It would be good if they have a teashop or coffee shop. At least, people can sit there, they can talk, they can eat, and they can drink whatever it is (59). That would be a good place to sit and socialize.

But do you think graduate students have time to socialize, and drink coffee?

If you make it, you will have time. Definitely, you can find time. That is the best way rather than talking here and there, and sitting in different places.

What else should be in that place? You mentioned coffee, Burger King, Dollar Tree...

If somebody can provide like sort of mini Wegmans where you can find bread, rice or something else, milk. That would be definitely good.

What about the price, taking into account that this store would be smaller than Wegmans and it would not sell in bulk like Wegmans?

I won't mind to pay few more cents if I get it conveniently, if I can walk down from Riverknoll and get these things (61). It would be cheaper for me to buy it here than to schedule go to Wegmans, especially for small things. I can very well go and get this stuff, so it is ok?

There is something else, in my country, when I was studying engineering; I had classes from 8:00am to 4:00pm, then the practical laboratories. It was very tiring. Weekdays basically you wanted some recreation, so for that our school provided very nice audio-vision club, with very nice movies on, so we used to have very nice movies every weekend, so that is a good thing for the students so we could walk down to that place (62). All students used to watch the movies and it was free. So that is a good way to socialize. That is a very good way to relax, you don't have to go somewhere else, and all is in group, so you can see all the school and all your friends in one place. We used to have films, festivals, every year, once. So RIT should have a movie theater.

Tell me more about those activities.

During the break for one week everyday we used to have movies and 2 shows everyday.

Did you have to pay for that?

No, everything was free, that's what I am saying, if so many students are there, right? You don't have to pay. The school can provide it or the movie will be very cheap. And it basically brings everyone together, all the class. It relaxes you and you are socializing with the same students.

What would be the purpose of socializing and being together?

Teamwork. You don't feel like only studying. You won't get hectic, you relax in the same group, the same people, and so it builds a harmony that is the basic. You don't have to talk about studies, what happened in your class, how marks you got, no! There are better friends. We used to see movies together, everything. That's a better way to success, isn't it? That was in fact required and probably most of the engineering schools in my country, we have such facilities.

Do you think RIT should create a service where you can get information about your country?

I don't think is required. If someone is interested, he can find easily from the web. I access one website everyday, 25 newspapers on my country. I don't have to do anything else on that. That's it.

Thanks for your cooperation...

Interview P

Tell me your experience of the first nine months at RIT.

Let's do transportation first.

Why transportation first?

I don't know. It just caught my attention. When I came to RIT obviously I took a taxi from the motel I was staying with to RIT. For a first couple of days until I found on-campus apartment, it took me a good month or more I think to realize that they actually had a bus (3). I walked back and forth in winter weather because it was spring when I arrived here. It was cold, rainy and still snowing, and I walked from Perkins apartments to campus in that weather, not realizing that they had a bus. I wasn't too informed about the FREE buses first of all, and then when I did find out about that information, it was great for me because in that way at least I could do my food shopping, take the bus to Wegmans and etc. and not have to wade through the snow to get to campus, that the buses come by Perkins, etc.

Once I found out about the transportation my life become much better (4). The second thing of transportation I remember was that at the end of the first quarter I had the thesis classes, and in the middle of the night, while working at the Dempsey house, I could pick up the phone and ask for the transportation service.

Dempsey house?

It was the house in John Street, up in the top of the hill. That's a white house that was given to this department for use of the graduate students. We had most of our classes in there. Dr. Marecki and Ed Steffens taught us in there. So that was fantastic. We had freedom there. We had also computers. I walked there a lot, and I worked there a lot but sometimes working on my thesis, I would end of being until 11:00pm or 12:00am at night and feeling a little uncomfortable walking back to the apartments. I could call this transportation service. Transportation on campus was great; go to the movies whenever I need it to (6). There was also access to where I wanted to go.

Recreations. Because I took sixteen credits hours, and I worked on-campus I did not have much time for recreation. I did however swim as much as I could in the pool. That was my form of relaxation, getting with the stress, etc. And I felt to certain extent that the information that is provided to you, for example that there is a room with pool, tables, and gaming rooms are not very clear. If you, as an international student, use the term "there is a bus service on-campus" it means absolutely nothing to me as an international student (10). If you tell me what that bus service is, then it is much better form of knowledge; that is portrait to the students because concepts differ from different cultures to cultures. So, when they said there is different recreational facilities on-campus that meant nothing to me because the same term used in my culture it is not necessarily the same recreational facilities that they do have here. So that I felt that they could have been laid out better the information, better given back and forth.

Another thing that I found with the recreational facilities was that they were not easily accessible (13). You have either call the number to find out what times the pool or the gym or whichever rooms will be available the next day. I feel that since they have a website or through the VAX account, they can make news more accessible thru the RIT website, that you can click on the recreational facilities like pool and it will tell you opening hours at any time.

When I arrived here it wasn't like that, I'm not sure if it is now. It's just easier for me now to call the number because that was what I got used to doing.

Related to the transportation, you said that you didn't know about the buses?

No, when I came to RIT they sent me the standard package of information that they send all students. That had a map of the campus, some information that I could be part of a family that I could choose to have that. It basically said that there was an apartment on-campus housing and it showed you the layout of the apartment. It said that an apartment cost \$800 dollars a month, so no further information was provided. Nowhere did it said that 4 people were required to share the apartment, and to share the following process takes place of how to get a roommate or how roommate were selected (15). So my assumption from the information that I got was that you would have to have 800 per month for an apartment.

I didn't even think it was an option. I came here complete blind with the idea that there must be some housing around campus here, students live in communes or in group housing, and I would be able to find a room somewhere underneath a roof somewhere and take a bus into a campus if it needs to be (17).

The same situation happened with transportation, too. No information was provided to me beforehand (19). So I had no idea what was available, even if pamphlets were given to me it said "Bus Schedule Spring Quarter" and it had a map with the bus stops and times but that didn't explain to me that the buses were for free, that they were for uses of RIT students, that they did go off-campus and they did follow this route on-campus as stated here (20).

American students because of their culture that they grow up in, there is a lot of assumptions (21). Everybody has a school bus that comes by and takes you to school. So if there's a bus on-campus they know that it is for free. So there is a lot of assumptions that Americans make that do not understand that people from other cultures do not know about. And there is when the information is not interpretable or accessible to foreign students. It needs to be more detailed when they send it out to students internationally.

So the first time I found out more about the buses I saw these buses coming by, but I had no idea if they were on-campus or off-campus. You don't stand and watch if the person gets in, pays and leaves. You see the bus, and you go on with your life. I think it was in the Student Union where I saw the pamphlet for the bus schedule, and I started asking them about that, and they said: "oh, no...the buses are for free" and only when someone explained to me then I finally understood what was going on.

Expectations about RIT. Coming from a different culture I had very different expectations. First of all, I come from a culture where you take a subject for a year. In the British system, at the end of that year, you will have to write an exam about everything you have done in that whole year. You will write a midterm, but you will write a final about everything in the whole year. So it is an immense amount of books. So, I thought coming here, after 10 years I have been out of school, I am going to suffer myself to death. I'm going to be stupid, I can't do that anymore, I'm going to have a tough time studying, etc, etc.

I came in here, and I took everything very seriously which helped because I did academically very well because I took everything so seriously, and I made such a big deal out of it.

They speak about credit hours but we work with another system. I had no idea what was a credit hour. They just speak "a class is worth four credit hours". You don't associate it "worth being" so many hours in class per week, which will give you, you know, a grade worked in percentage. So my expectations of RIT, I thought it was going to be academically difficult for me, turned out not to be at all. I did not have many different expectations because I found RIT on the web in South Africa so I had an idea what it would look like. I would prefer seeing a whole campus shot from the air, to see where it was situated in regarding to the city of Rochester because I had no idea where in correlation with the city and the lake RIT was situated. Only when I arrived here it took me longer when I finally found a map to see where exactly we were. When I started driving myself I started realizing exactly where we were situated. How far it was to the lake, how far were other locations. That would mean, I think a lot to students if they have to go to downtown to get anything, to realize this is the lake, this is the city, this is RIT, etc. It's going to take you 20 min. by bus to get into the city center, 25 min. by bus to get to the train station, and the Greyhound station from where then you can travel out of the city (28).

International students that do come here, not only come to study at RIT, but they come here also for the fact that they can see Niagara Falls, go to Toronto, all the attractions that Rochester can offer, and I feel that RIT can do a good job in dragging (attracting) more students by providing them with a little bit more of detailed information (29). It is not going to be pages, but 20 minutes by bus to downtown and then for this cost, this time to Niagara Falls. And that is a draw that can use to drag more people and realize that they can save up this much money, and then go to Niagara Falls. So it is really, really accessible. But coming here and being here without that information most people never get to see Niagara Falls.

Admissions. I get spoiled by Anne and Diane that literally let me by the hand with everything that I need it to do. They told me where to go, what to do, and how to find everything. It's a little different as an international student, and many other international students arrived here in the middle of the quarter because of the flowing system or they arrive here before the classes start because of the accommodations, etc, etc. We cannot get into the apartment any earlier than the first of September and therefore you never do an orientation.

Orientation is offered for students within the first week, I'm aware of that. But students like me that came at the beginning of the year there is no orientation (30). So, if it could be something included in the pamphlet that they send you that would give you knowledge. What is the process you are going to go through once you arrive to RIT? First, get your VAX account, what is the

VAX account. That term was absolutely nothing to me when I arrived here. If they say get your e-mail account, which is called "VAX" account, that would be something completely different.

But again, assumptions of terms instead of making knowledge available to international students they disuse the term, which means absolutely nothing.

The admission process was not really hassle for me because I have done all my documentation right and read, and again, as I said, Anne and Diane just led me in the whole process. I got lost, I came back, they said: "no, you have to go there, there and there. And then it was really easy for me (33).

Another thing was a barrier for me was the fact that they speak as core courses and electives, that is a foreign term to me. We call it required courses. So if they give a better explanation of a standard core courses offered in a specific quarters because it took me a while to realize that certain courses are offered in certain quarters. And once you understand that, it would be much easier to plan ahead instead of having somebody else have control over what you take. And is less of the confusion when you arrive here.

How did you get the information about RIT?

Do you mean when I applied to RIT?

Yes

I went through a woman and I paid her a fee to research universities and colleges for me. I told her I wanted to study something to do with tourism and hotel, something or other and she found a couple of universities: Houston, Washington, and NY (Rochester), and I applied to all of them and got accepted and chose to come to RIT because it is smaller university coming from a university of 125, 000 resident students. I decided I wanted something more intimate where I am not a number, where I am a person, and it turned out be the best choice of my life. That was how I found out about RIT and once I decided I want to come to RIT then I went onto the web and finally found that in the long way, not having their website (37). That's another thing, I think they could do better is once a student has applied and they send the papers, is give them the website with the request that they learn more in the web of RIT, what looks like, what RIT can offer, because more international students will be able to get to the internet, access with a computer where they can do some of the research instead of being blind.

So, you found the information there, filled out the application and you sent it?

She found all of the stuff for me, and she sent me the admissions form, through this woman that I worked with. She sent me all the paper work and I sent it back to her and she sent it to RIT. So I worked through an administrator so do speak to get accepted into RIT.

And how long was the process? Do you remember?

Hum, six months, well, the mail from South Africa to America is three weeks (39).

So, did you receive all the responses through that lady?

Once RIT knew about me, that I have been accepted, they sent the information directly to me. So they sent me the information pamphlets, the housing pamphlets, etc, etc.

So, did you have any questions at that time?

Oh, many... I had no one to ask because they gave me a phone number and there is no way for me to pick up the phone from my country, paying five dollars per minute to call somebody here and find out what is going on (40). It's too expensive (41).

So, what did you do?

I came here blind (43). I came here with realizing that whatever question I had someone will help me. I was brave enough to do that only basically because I had traveled before in my life. And I knew that would be a way to do this. But I think for a lot of students the lack of information is an enormous barrier and the ability to find information in the website, for example to find a link for international student questions that they can ask someone on campus, admissions, or residence life or whichever any kind of question that can be routed to the right person because from there usually they give one e-mail address. It never gets into the right person, that person just delete it of his e-mail and you never get answered your question (45). So, it is a little bit difficult and it prevents some students from coming here because the risk is just too great when you do not know what is going on (46). You don't want to take the risk and come here, only to find out that, no, you cannot get housing and, now what do you do? So, that definitely creates a barrier.

Accommodations. I spoke about that briefly. I found accommodation on my own. I came here also at the end of the quarter. Now, things are different with accommodations and it is going to make it very difficult to students who want to enter in spring or in a different quarter because on-campus now you have to sign up now for a full year. You cannot sign up just for one quarter and therefore there is a very little accommodations if you decide to enter in spring. You don't have a place to live, basically. So, that creates a barrier to entry, because everybody is locked into their apartments until the end of Spring when in Summer time they move out (49). They can change apartments if they are really unhappy in it, gets mediated, etc, etc.

But they are there from fall until the beginning of summer. So if you come in springtime you have a problem because where are going to live? Maybe off-campus. If somebody wants a roommate somewhere in the city and then commute by bus. But then they make it difficult to live.

Another thing is that you really have to be on-campus because you don't have your own transportation. International students with the dollar being so strong as it is, simply cannot afford a car, not until he earn money here, for quite sometime (52).

What was the reason to move off-campus?

The reason why I moved off-campus... I lived on Perkins apartments for one year and then I moved into Riverknoll for the summer time and then my husband and I bought a car together and that gave us the opportunity to move off-campus because off-campus it is not only cheaper, it's quieter, it's cleaner, it's NEWER, it has more facilities (53). Living accommodations are just much better living off-campus than it is on-campus. I think that eventually if you live in a new apartment it's fine, if you live in Perkins even up to that point it's fine, Riverknoll is old and they are crappy, yes... they are...

They are going to demolish the apartments within a couple of years, but in the meantime, they are making students pay through their noses the same amount basically as what a student in the new apartments (55). Also, it is just too expensive, 900 dollars for one bedroom apartment. We got one apartment off-campus for 520 dollars, which make a big difference (57).

Food Service. Because I immediately came into the on-campus apartment I never lived in the dorms, I cooked my own food. I went to Wegmans and I shopped there almost all of my food. Another thing which is related with information again, is a barrier to students, they tell you are going to need so many thousands of dollars for food that is false, that is if you are going to live in the dorms, which as a graduate student, you do not and they tell you that you are going to need that much (59). They should really provide you with information telling you a graduate student you have the option to eat on-campus. Breakfast cost this, lunch cost this, dinner cost this, which will be then in a monthly basis, so many thousands of dollars.

If you shop at Wegmans or the new store on-campus your monthly bill will be between \$100 or \$200 dollars depending on how, you know, expensively you eat. Most months my budget went about \$100 dollars, which is very little, but I was very careful what I shopped; very little meat because I was supporting myself from the beginning which is a barrier financially. For a lot of international students coming in, they simply cannot afford to just go and eat in the dinner rooms, so again, they think they are going to come here and it is going to cost them so many thousands of dollars, and it is not true. They do not give them clearly budget.

So, by any chance did you eat in the cafeteria?

Never, only when I started working. It was too expensive for me. I cooked for the same amount when I would spend to paying one meal I could eat for 3 days, so budget wise for me it made for me no sense whatsoever for me to go and to eat in the dining hall rather than cooking my own food in the apartment.

And what is your opinion about the food, taking into account that you ate there when you started working?

The food in Grace Watson Dining Hall. I ate there once I started working in the summer. The quality of the food is fantastic; the people work really hard to keep the variety and the quality. I think I have little complaint about that. Obviously as an international student you have no choice but to eat American food: American hot dogs, which was a great adjustment for me, especially because I did not like it very much, because it was very processed. Something I wasn't used to, the fact that I come from a country where we have mango, litchi, papaya juice, you name it, so no, the food in there did not meet any of my South Africa taste needs, but I didn't expect it to.

Because I just thought that while I am in America, they are going to serve me American food. That's the way it is.

Are those needs related just because we don't have your food here or is it something else?

If they would give me the choice of South African food what I would eat there?

Probably not, because it is still too expensive. Once I found at Wegmans the parish kind of things that I could make a South African kind of Parish, the flour and things for that, I make it myself.

Say it was a different situation, if I was a rich student and they offered me food would I eat there? Yes, but most international students that come to campus do not have an abundance of American dollars. Students that come here on scholarships, that 's completely different because the scholarship pays for their food and accommodations. For them the need would be different than for me, but I cannot speak for them, because I did not come here with scholarship (70).

What about the knowledge about the food?

In the dorms, where I was in my undergraduate in South Africa, they had the menu posted weeks beforehand that you would know in the beginning of the week what you will be eating next week, and you can book a meal or not. I think that if they would do that on-campus that we are required to book a meal and then to come and have it. I think this will work much better because they will cook exactly what they need, they know exactly how much to expend and they can work on their budget much easier. It might be more work initially because it is another kind of system because they have their things done to "spec" (specifications) right now. They are doing very very well by estimating how much they need to make and using whatever food they have, but I did see an enormous waste in the Grace Watson Dining Hall by students who dish up an enormous portion of things for themselves and send it back to the dishline where I worked in the summer time and the waste of food is immense. That for me was an enormous shock coming from a country where there is poverty and hunger. I feel if they made it into a system where people book for their meals, they would know exactly how much of what they need to make and then people would also be much more careful with their food and not waste it.

That way they would know that I'm going to go today for a dinner and I am going to eat meatballs and rice and that is what I am going to eat. If there is something else, I am not eating it because I chose to have meatballs and rice. But then again, the American culture doesn't mind that. They want the freedom of choice. But I still feel that would work better if they do that.

And do you know all the food that they are serving now? How do you feel about that?

After having worked there, yes. I think as an international student coming here everything is strange, including the food, and if they can give you some kind of layout, a little pamphlet with the kind of meals that are served in a regular basis. That you can get to know the meal, know what the ingredients are. It's a great job, it is a lot of information really required which is taught job to assimilate and I am aware of that. But, if you are a tourist and you are going to Spain you can access the information so easily of every castle, how to get there, what you will see there and I feel the same as with RIT with any international student. Even students coming from Texas or

New Orleans, it would be the same for them. They will really want to know what's going on and if there is easy and clearly information saying, "This is an idea of...what we serve in our dining halls".

In that way if they are requesting for different kinds of foods they can assimilate and process it much easier into their system rather than just serving whatever they think are dishes people like.

Classes. Huff... I remember that it was a hard adjustment for me (77). Being in classes where everything is so informal. I adjusted very quickly though because I had the experience of adjusting to various cultures, etc. etc. I have noticed, especially with the Asian cultures that it is an immense adjustment for them to come into a class and suddenly you have to start speaking up (79). Again, that is something that could be provided as an information to students that if you are coming in a graduate level, most of your classes will be group discussion that it will be reading and presentations in front of your teammates and classmates and the facilitator is not a teacher, he is not an instructor, he is a facilitator (80). Because most of the time it is self-learning and if you are prepared to come into a class knowing that, ok. I am going to have to perform in the following manner or the following ways, that way you have much more power to adjust before that. You know, ahead what to expect. It's probably not going to fix the culturally barrier between the Asian and American culture but it might be better to provide them with the information before have it.

I don't remember anything about the first classes. I had just settling and adjusting and finding a place to stay that everything was at that stage still survival and I think that is something that a lot of people do not understand about international students.

The first couple of weeks until you adjust, everything is survival (81). You are just taking a day-to-day dealing with every single thing that you come in contact because every single thing is strange to you.

I do remember however that walking into class they were a lot of terms and ideas, which was foreign to me (82). And it was assumed that you knew that "Customer Sat" was. When somebody said the first time "Customer Sat." it made absolutely no sense to me.

So, I think if there could be a text that they could recommend for graduate students in our program. Go and scan that book if you can find it. Here's a list of reading material, which you might want to prepare yourself with to get familiar with the terms we focus on.

Here are a couple of books that we work on for different courses, go scan through it and see what are the things we work with, definitions and the terms we speak of and we use in our terminology as we teach.

The first quarter I have to admit was difficult for me because I still struggle to understand what was going on. I struggle to understand terms; I was just still finding my feet. By the second quarter things were better and by the last quarter I was setting into the point of that, "ah...now I understand what he said in the first quarter when I was here".

Registration. Basically Anne and Diane helped me suit it, telling me what to do, where to go. Dr. Marecki showed me what class I should register for and Anne used to register me for it. I got my VAX account and my ID, everything on their instruction, so everything went suitably. Once you know what to do, it is an easy process and it is very easy to get anything that you need to get. You just need to know how to get it and where to get it.

That was the first quarter. And the second quarter, how did you register?

Anne registered me again. I didn't even know I could go into the SIS and register myself (86).

How did you find out about SIS?

Through my husband. Nobody told me that before. I knew about it only after the summer quarter, when I came here. After two quarters. I found another student who showed me what was SIS, and how I could go into. Again, I didn't do orientation on-campus. I didn't do orientation of the library where they show what is the VAX account, how to go onto Wally's web site, and what is SIS.

None of that information was available to me when I came here. I walked completely blind. I didn't miss it because I never had that in my own country.

Activities after classes. Most of the times we were here, on-campus or you know in the Dempsey house. We did the teamwork, went together to the library, met with our team members, classmates. Sometimes Dr. Marecki had us meet somewhere in a restaurant or bar, which was very nice. But, again for me sometimes it was a financial barrier because they would order a pizza or something like that in class, and it would be difficult for me to take out seven or ten dollars that I would need to pay for the pizza because that would be essentially four days worth food for me.

So, what did you do in that case?

Most of the times I said that I had food with me, and I am not interested on sharing a pizza. Sometimes it was uncomfortable, sometimes it was embarrassing, to have to say, "oh, thanks guys, but no thanks, I am not sharing with you this time" because it is considered unsociable. Especially American students sometimes don't understand, but the American students who were in class with me fortunately started to know me and realize that the situation wasn't because I was stingy, it was because I really had no other way of survival. It was either that or starts getting loans from a person in South Africa to pay for pizzas, movies, clothes, which I could do right without. Which if I do borrow it was an interest of twenty-four to thirty percentages. It is unimaginable being that stupid, borrowing money at that interest rate, which will take me many many years to pay back.

International Student department. The people there were very very friendly. The people there were always available to give me information. I felt a little guilty about bothering them because I felt that it wasn't their job to give me all of this petty little information pieces (92). I basically

thought that they worked with the major things, getting a work card, getting your social security number, helping with the visa information and things like that.

Coming from a British system, courtesy is a very strong point, so you don't assume that they will do anything for you and therefore it is much harder to just walk in and say, "Could you help me with this, could you help me with that?"

You would go and ask, "Do you maybe have information for me about buses on-campus, and they will definitely help you, but it is a barrier walking in there, assuming that they would have the knowledge for you and wondering that if they don't have it, now they have to scramble to get it for you because they want to provide such a wonderful service for you. If they could give you some kind of information of what services they do provide for you, it might get easier for students to just walk and ask them. Especially in the Asian cultures, that rudeness is the last thing that is acceptable. That make easier for them to know that they can go and ask anything and everything if they need from the international student department.

Do you remember any activity offered to international students?

Oh, yes. That is something I got very lucky with. I put my name to show my interest on taking part in having a host family and they sent me information that there was a "maple syrup tour" just when I came here and this is the person to call. So, I picked up the phone, and I called her. She became very good good friend of me. She said that her tour was full but that was the beginning of knowing that they take these tours for international student. They make it very easy for you: they pick you up and it cost you nothing. All they do is take you around and show you the Finger Lakes; whatever excursion you can take part in you meet other international students, and you have the most wonderful kindness with the people that take you around. So, that became a big outlet for me to first of all, to get off-campus and then meets other people. So that was a wonderful recreational thing for me that I enjoyed a lot (97).

Do you suggest any other service on-campus?

It is hard to say because coming from a country where there is such poor infrastructure and so little service. Service to them is a smile and a friendly good morning and there it stops.

Advising. I never had an adviser. Dr. Marecki was basically my instructor I guess and my adviser all in one. I never felt that I needed for an adviser because again, like any other service, it was unexpected (98). Orientation day didn't happen for me as I just said.

Do you think it was just you or everybody in spring?

Everybody in spring, there is no orientation in spring. Or there was none that I was inform of or aware of or made aware of that there would be a day in which they will take you through campus, explain all of the services on campus. Again if they don't want to send you the pamphlets, then give the information that there will be a day that will not conflict with all of other classes and things that I have. I wouldn't have to miss a class to do this because obviously then would miss it. If your first responsibility is your class, don't send me the information then.

As an international student to have it in my country in my safer environment start assimilating all the information, then when I arrive here it is not so intense and strange (99).

Describe your activities after classes and on weekends.

Study. Work (100).

Where did you used to work?

Ah, in the Dempsey house. Most of the time I spent time in my apartment for the first and second quarter. I literally just worked and studied, that is what I did.

And Weekends?

Same thing, I didn't have a car so I didn't go off-campus (101). Most weekends I did walked to South Town Plaza where I did banking and buy something that I need it, of course Wegmans (102). The American friends that I had, yes, most of the weekends all of us used to have extra work load to be able to finish up. We went for a movie once in a while, we did meet. But, again I couldn't afford to go to see the new movies, etc. etc. We spent time visiting with each other, which I got to know my friends very well.

What about other international students?

I did not have such an intense link with other international students because most of the people that were in my class were Asians, and they tend not to mix with the American culture. While I lived with other Americans, my exposure was mainly with Americans. I felt very comfortable with the Americans, so I did not make friends with other international students. But again they were in the same situation that I was, that they had to study a lot, to work a lot, to support themselves on-campus.

Did you meet anybody from your country?

No, and I didn't regret it either.

Why?

I believe that when you go to a place or a country you have to assimilate where you are, don't try to keep your own culture, you will learn a lot more when you expose yourself to the place area and the culture area (107). Wherever I traveled I always did the same, so it came as a natural action for me, sound as a something that I deliberate did, but it just that I immerse myself into my studies, work and the culture here, so I just naturally did it.

And after all that learning, after your classes and everything, how do you see yourself in the future?

I see myself definitely a better person. I come from a culture where there is a very little learning that takes place. There is a lot of knowledge impregnation if I can call it like that. You take books, study the books and you write exams about it. Coming to RIT, I learned in a different way, where I was exposed to self-learning, team learning, share knowledge, practical knowledge. Information here is very accessible to everybody. So, I learned probably more than I did in most of my studies back in South Africa.

How that is going to help you in the future?

Knowledge is power and if you have the knowledge and the ability, or the understanding to relearn for the rest of your life, you are a much better employee, a much greater asset to any company and to yourself. To take what you have learned and apply it is an easy thing to do, but to grow your knowledge and to grow in intellect to a point where you are in power, so that you will be able not only to make your own decisions, but also to lead.

I would say that with all of the things I talked about, if I would had more information, it would made it easier for me to learn and to grow much quicker than I did, but I spent at least the first and second quarter of my only three quarters of classes here adjusting (109). Adjusting, finding information about this, information about that. I had a kind of a stunted growth upon to the point where I finely found my wings and started to fly.

Language. I experienced no language barriers because English is my official language. The accent here is easy to understand. New York city is a different situation, where they speak fast but in Rochester is softer.

Cultural wise. I have very little barriers, except for the TV programs and films that a lot of Americans refer to incidents in all TV programs. They will use a phrase out of a film and everybody would know what they are talking about, and everybody would laugh, and you have no idea what was going on (111). So culturally yes, there is a very strong culture with a film and TV in this country, which is completely different where I come from. The culture is more symbolic language for instance, so that was a little bit of adjustment. But my adjustment was not major, because I had exposure to the culture and to the language before.

Thanks for your cooperation...